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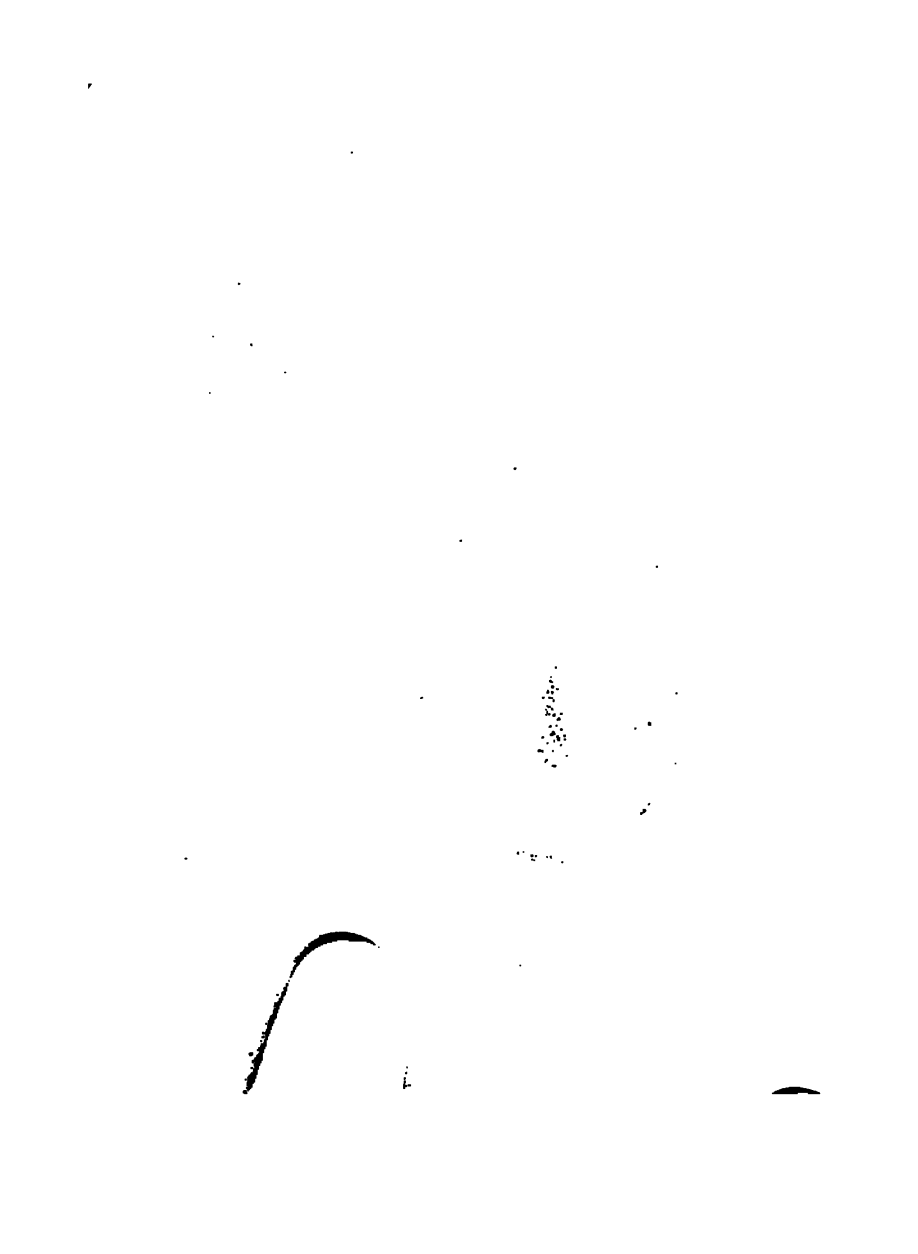

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No. 9

URITH

By S. BARING GOULD

IN TWO VOLUMES

Copyright Edition

URITH

BY

S. BARING GOULD

AUTHOR OF

"MEHALAH," "JOHN HERRING," &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME II.

LEIPZIG

HEINEMANN AND BALESTIER

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URITH: A TALE OF DARTMOOR

CHAPTER XXXI.

FAMILY JARS.

"WHAT is the meaning of the strange talk that is about concerning thee and Elizabeth Cleverdon?" asked Julian of her brother at breakfast next morning.

"Nay, that is putting on me more than I can do. I should be sorry to account for all the idle talk that blows and drifts about on the stream of conversation, like leaves of autumn on a trout pool."

"I heard it yesterday, and you certainly showed her great attention so long as you were at the dance."

"Did I show her more attention than you showed to one I do not name? Faith! if I had listened to and picked up the scraps of scandal cast about, I might have filled an apron with what wanton words I heard concerning thee."

He looked hard at Julian, and their eyes met. She coloured, but shook off her embarrassment, and turned to her father and said, "The saying is that my brother is setting his cap to catch Bessie Cleverdon."

Mr. Crymes became grave, and looked at his son. He was a stern and Puritanical man, who had kept himself aloof from his children, never entering into their amusements, not concerning himself with what they did. Julian's fortune was assured to her, and his son would inherit something, the relics of the paternal estate, and what he had saved when managing for Julian.

"Is there anything in this, Anthony?" he asked. "On my honour, I am surprised."

"There is truth and there is falsehood in it," answered Fox, carelessly. "It has come to this, that as Julian cannot be Anthony Cleverdon's wife, it lies open to her to become his mother. Old Master Cleverdon is nothing loth, and, if she will accept him, she will have the opportunity of bringing the father to good terms with the son, for, from what I have seen, the happiness of Tony lies very near to my sister's heart. If she declines the old man, I shall try my fortune with his daughter."

"This is absurd, Fox," said Julian, highly incensed.

"Absurd it may be—but the old gentleman has his head full of it, and has commissioned me to sound his way with you."

"Be silent," said Julian, very red, and very angry, "I do not believe one word of this; but that you are aiming at Bessie that I do believe, though when I asked her about it, she had no knowledge of anything of the kind."

"Before we proceed to consider my affairs, let u settle yours," said Fox. "Am I to tell Squire Cleve don of Hall that you will not favour his suit, beir *already too* deep gone in attachment to the son?"

"Silence to that slanderous tongue!" said Mr. Crymes, wrathfully. "Julian at one time was thought of in reference to young Tony Cleverdon, but he did not fancy her, but took Urith Malvine. From that moment the name of Tony Cleverdon, in connection with my daughter and your sister, is not to be employed in jest or earnest, by you or any other. Understand that."

"Then," said Fox, with his eye on his father, out of the corner, "let her keep herself out of folks' mouths, and not be like a rat I saw 'tother day, that ran into the jaws of my terrier, mistaking his open mouth for a run."

"What is he aiming at?" inquired Mr. Crymes, turning to his daughter. "I know he has a wicked tongue, but I cannot think he can speak without some occasion."

"There is nothing—that is to say——" Julian became confused. "Why may I not speak to—why not dance with an old, old friend?"

"I have no command to lay on you not to speak to, not to dance with an old friend," said her father, "but everything in moderation; take notice from your brother that evil eyes look out for occasion, therefore give none. If Ahab had no weak places in his armour, the bow drawn at a venture would not have sent an arrow to him with death at the point. No bluebottles are bred where carrion is not found."

Julian looked down abashed, then, with woman's craft, shifted the subject.

"It is nonsense that Tony speaks. I do not be-

lieve for an instant that Master Cleverdon has any suit for me in his head—if he has, no marvel if folk talk, but God be wi' me, it will not be I who occasion it."

"What do you mean by this?" asked the father, now turning to his son. "Has my friend Cleverdon said aught to justify you?"

"My dear father, if you wish it, and Julian does not object, he will step from the position of good friend into son. He has cast an eye on Kilworthy, and as Kilworthy cannot be had without Julian, i' faith, he will take both."

"Let him dare to offer this to me!" exclaimed Julian, "and until he does, pass it over. I refuse to accept any message through such a go-between."

"It is no fault of mine," said Fox, "if the father thinks that some of the overspill of love and languishment for his son may redound to him. I do not see how Jule, if she desire to chastise her faithless lover for having despised her charms, can do so more effectually and more cuttingly than by taking his father. Then Tony Cleverdon is in her hands absolutely. She can reconcile his father to him or tear them apart for ever. She can bring him, if she will, to bite the dust at her feet, to fawn at her knee, and to a woman such power is precious."

"That suffices," said Mr. Crymes; "you heard what was her answer. She will speak no more on this matter with you. If Cleverdon comes to me with the suit, I will know what reply to make: if he goes to Julian, she can answer him herself. Meanwhile do you keep silence thereon. I but half trust what thou sayest. Such

fancies breed in thy perverse mind. Come now to the other matter. Is it true that you seek Elizabeth Cleverdon? For her sake I trust not, for I esteem her exceeding well as much as I reckon thee below the general level of good men. If I thought there was aught mendable in thee that could be shaped by the hands of a good wife, I would say God prosper thee. But I fear me thou art over-rotten at the heart to be ripened to any good, over-hard to be moulded to a vessel of honour."

"I do not see why you should think so ill of me, father," said Fox, sullenly; "unless it be that your ear has drunk in all the complaints Julian has poured out against me. What she says you accept, what I say you cast away. Then, I fancy, the time is come when you will be glad to have me married and got rid of."

"You do seek marriage?"

"I seek to be away from those who flout and despise me, who cross me and mistrust me. At least Squire Cleverdon and I understand each other, and regard each other."

"Yes," broke in Julian; "for in each is the same yeast of sourness."

"Be silent, Julian," commanded her father. "Let me hear the boy out."

"What concern me the quirks and hints I hear concerning Jule?" pursued Fox, unable, in spite of his father, to contain himself from a stroke at his sister, "let them fly about thick as midges, they are naught to me—they do not sting me. Why, father, you should

grudge me Bessie Cleverdon, I cannot see. If you respect her so highly—think so excellent well of her—I doubt that no other maid would so content you as a daughter-in-law as she."

"A better girl does not exist," answered Mr. Crymes, "I would desire her a better fate than to be united to thee."

"She is not comely, that is a fact," continued Fox, "but she will be the richest heiress in all the Tavistock district—between here and Plymouth and Exeter. Now that Master Cleverdon has fallen out with his son, and that there is no riddance by Anthony of the wife with whom he has saddled himself, not to please his father, or himself—or Jule yonder——"

Mr. Crymes brought his fist down on the table.

"I will drive thee out of the room at another word against thy sister."

"Do you notice, father," exclaimed Julian, with flaming cheeks, "it is poor Bessie's money and the lands of Hall that he covets, and he seeks this by levering out of his place his best friend and old comrade."

"Did I lever him out of his place?" retorted Fox. "He did it himself, and never a little finger did I put to help in his upsettal."

"No, but you are ready to profit by his loss; ready, if you could, to get me as your confederate in fencing every inlet by which he might return to his father," said Julian, vehemently.

"Because one man is a fool, is that reason why *his friend*—as you choose to term me—should not be

wise? Because one man throws away a diamond, why his comrade should not pick it up and wear it on his finger?"

"The case is not the same. It is taking the jewel, and smiting the rightful owner in the face when he puts forth his hand to reclaim it, and that rightful owner—your friend."

"My friend!" exclaimed Fox, angrily. "Why should you call Anthony Cleverdon 'my friend?' Was it an act of a friend—a dear, considerate friend—to strike me in the eye and half blind me? Look!" Fox turned his left side towards his sister. "Do I not carry about with me a mark of friendship—a pledge to be redeemed? Trust me, I shall return that blow with usury some day, when the occasion comes."

"And you will employ poor Bessie as your lash wherewith you filip him in the face. You are a coward —a mean——"

"Silence!" commanded Mr. Crymes. "There is no grain of brotherly love between you two——"

"Not a grain," threw in Julian, hotly.

Fox bowed sarcastically.

"You observe, father," he said, "that here I am at a disadvantage, between a sister who spars at me and a father who treads me down."

"I do not tread on you save when you grovel in the dirt," answered Mr. Crymes, "in base and dishonest matters, and I do esteem this suit of Elizabeth Cleverdon as one such."

"Opinions vary. You make me willing to leave my home, though it be not mine, nor thine neither, father,

but that of sister Julian, who stuffs my pillow with thorns and the seat of my chair with nettles. I would be away at any price, and if I can go to Hall and live there with Squire Cleverdon, I doubt not I shall be more content than I be here."

"You will live there?" said his father.

"No doubt. Master Cleverdon has ever had his daughter Elizabeth with him. He might have sent her packing, as he sent his own sister packing, when he needed her no more, and that would have been when Anthony brought home a wife to his taste. As he has not—if Julian still persists in declining to be my mother-in-law—why, I reckon that Bess will remain at Hall. A man must leave father and mother and cleave to his wife—so it will be scriptural, and that should content thee, father."

The old man drew forth his 'kerchief and wiped his face.

"I suppose, father," continued Fox, "that you will hardly let me go penniless out of the house? That would be a pretty comment on your professions. You must have saved something, and there is that little scrap of land still ours in Buckland——"

Mr. Crymes again wiped his face. He did not know what answer to make.

"Or, is the fashion set by Squire Cleverdon of cutting his son off without a shilling so infectious, that my father has taken it, and will follow suit, and sicken into the same green infirmity?"

"No," said Mr. Crymes, "I will do what is right; but you spring this on me, I am taken aback——"

"I did not spring it on you. That is one of the many kindnesses I have received from Jule."

"I do not know what to say. You must give me time to consider. This journey to London has cost me a considerable sum of money."

"There comes the usual excuse for shirking out of a money obligation which cannot be enforced by law. Say on, father—the times have been bad, the hay was black with rain, the corn did not kern well, the mottled cow dropped her calf, the tenants have not paid, and so my poor boy gets nothing but advice in bushels and exhortations in yards."

"Having insulted your sister, you now throw your jibes at me. That is not encouraging me to deal handsomely towards you."

"I did not think, father, that you needed to be coaxed and caressed to do an act of justice."

"I do not ask that of thee, but I must consider. It ill pleases me that you should have thought of Bessie Cleverdon."

"If I had chosen some worthless wench without a penny to bless herself withall, you would have shaken the head and broken the staff over me. Now that I have chosen one who is in all ways unexceptional, who is a wealthy heiress of irreproachable manners of life, the favourite of everybody, a dutiful daughter, it is all the same—you disapprove. Is there aught I could do —any change I could make—that would give thee pleasure?"

"None—till I saw there was amendment in thyself."

"If I can give satisfaction in no way to thee, father,

I may assuredly make choice for myself. Bess may not be beautiful, but she pleases me—she has what is better than beauty, all Hall estate on her back. It will be to your advantage and to that of Jule that I should take her—you will thus be rid of me, who content neither of you, simply because my tongue has a point to it, and I do not suffer it to lie by and be blunted."

Then Julian laughed out—

"What avails all this reckoning and debating over a matter that cannot be settled till the main person concerned has been consulted? Bessie, I am very sure, has not the faintest waft of a notion that such schemes are being spun about her, or had not till I spoke with her yestreen. She will never take thee, Fox. Bessie has a good heart and a shrewd understanding, and neither will suffer her to take thee."

"You think not?" asked Fox, superciliously.

"I am sure she will not," answered Julian.

"We shall see," said Fox. "She is not as was her brother, one to fly in the face of a father. He has set his mind to it, and if Julian will not have him, then he will yet have an Anthony Cleverdon to sit on his seat, and reign in his stead, when he has been gathered to his old yeoman fathers."

"How mean you?"

"Why thus—I am Anthony. I was thus christened. And if I take Bess, I will throw aside my surname of Crymes, which brings me little—and take that of my father-in-law. So he will have an Anthony Cleverdon to carry on the name, and I—" his face assumed a

malevolent expression, "I shall have spoiled for ever his own son's chances. I shall be down in black-and-white, and bound as fast as I can bind him. See if I cannot manage for myself."

He stood up, took his hat, and set it jauntily on his head, then, at the door turned, and with a mocking laugh, said:

"There, sister Jule! Is not that a slap in the face for Anthony, that will make his cheek tingle?"

He left the room.

Mr. Crymes laid his brow in his hand, and his elbow on the table.

"'Fore heaven!" he sighed, "I curse the day that gave me such a son."

CHAPTER XXXII.

MORE JARS.

A DRIZZLING rainy day. A day on which nothing could be seen but a wavering veil of minute dust of water. A drizzle that was wetting, and which penetrated everywhere. The air was warm, laden with moisture, oppressive and depressing. From a window could be seen nothing beyond a hedge. Trees seemed to be bunches of cotton wool; the drizzle crawled or was drawn along by a damp wind over the grass, along the hedge, beading every blade and twig with the minutest drops of moisture. The shrubs, the plants stooped, unable to support the burden deposited on them, and

shot the impalpable waterdust down on the soil in articulate drops.

Although the drizzle was excluded by roof and walls from the house, the moisture-charged atmosphere could not be shut out, and it made the interior only less wretched than outside the house. The banisters, the jambs of the door, the iron locks were bedewed, and the hand that touched them left a smear and came off clogged with water. The slates of the floor turned black, and stood with drops, as though the rain had splashed over them. Wherever there was a stone in the wall of a slatey or impervious nature, it declared itself by condensing moisture, sweating through plaster and whitewash, and sending tears trickling down the walls. The fire-irons became suddenly tarnished and rusty. The salt in the sellar and salt-box was sodden, and dripped brine upon the floor, as did the hams and sides of bacon hung up in the kitchen. The table-linen and that for the beds adhered to the fingers when touched.

Anthony stood at the window in the hall looking out, then he went to the fire; then took down a gun from over the mantel-shelf and looked at the lock and barrel; stood it in the corner of the fire, and resolved by and by to clean it. Then he went to the window again, and wrote his initials on the window-pane, or tried to do so, and failed, for the condensation of moisture was not inside but without, on the glass.

He had nothing to occupy him; no work could be done on the farm, and employment or amusement *lacked in the* house.

Where was Urith? She might come and talk to and entertain him.

What is the good of a wife, unless she sets herself to make home agreeable to her husband, when he is unable to go out-of-doors?

Where was Solomon Gibbs? He might have talked, fiddled, and sung, though, indeed, Anthony had no relish just then for music, and he knew pretty well all the topics on which Uncle Sol had aught to say. His anecdotes had often been retailed, and Anthony loathed them. He knew when Sol was preparing to tell one, he knew which he was about to produce, he was acquainted with every word he would use in telling his tale.

Anthony had grown irritable of late with Sol, and had brushed him rudely when he began to repeat some hacknied anecdote. On such a day as this, however, even Uncle Sol were better than no one.

At length, Anthony, impatient and out of humour, went upstairs, and called Urith. She answered him faintly from a distance.

"Where are you hidden? What are you about?" he called.

"In the lumber-room," she replied.

He followed the direction of her voice, and came to a sort of garret full of every kind of discarded article of domestic use, old crocks that had lost a leg, broken-backed chairs, a dismantled clock, corroded rush-lights, bottles that were cracked, a chest of drawers which had lost half the brass-handles by which the drawers could be pulled out.

In the obscurity, dishevelled, covered with dust, and

warm with her exertions, stood Urith. She put her hand to her face, and pushed her strayed hair from her eyes.

"I want thy help, Tony," she said. "I have been searching, and at length I have found it. But I cannot carry it forth myself."

"Found what?"

"Oh—how can you ask? Do you not see what it is?"

It was an old, dusty, cobweb-covered, wooden cradle.

"What do you want, Urith, with this wretched bit of rummage?"

"What do I want it for? Oh—Tony, of course you know. It is true I shall not need it immediately—not for some months, but I shall like to have it forth, and clean it well, and polish its sides, and fit it up with little mattress and pillows, and whatsoever it need, before the time come when it is required to be put in use."

"I will not have this wretched old cradle," said Anthony. "It is not meet for my son—the heir to Hall and Willsworthy."

"You are reckoning too soon—" laughed Urith. "Perhaps you may have a daughter, not a son."

"A daughter! I do not want a maid; no—I shall never forgive you, if it be not a boy. Urith! My—everything depends on that. When there is a new Anthony Cleverdon, my father can hold out in his obstinacy no longer. He must give way. An Anthony Cleverdon of Willsworthy, and *not* of Hall! It would *go against* his most cherished ambition. It cannot, it

shall not be. Urith, a boy it must be, and what is more, he shall not lie in that dusty, cobwed-clad pig-trough. It would not become him."

"But Tony," laughed Urith, "it was mine, I was rocked in that. It was not so bad that I could not sleep therein."

"Oh you!" he spoke disparagingly in tone. "You were heiress of Willsworthy only, but my young Anthony will be something much different from that."

"I want my child to lie in the same crib in which I was rocked. It will be a pleasure to me."

"I will not have it. This is too mean."

"What does it signify?"

"If it does not signify, then let me go and buy a new cradle."

"No," said Urith. "No—there I lay when a poor little feeble creature; and there, in the same, it shall lie when it comes."

"I will go into Peter Tavy to the carpenter, and order a new cradle."

"I will not use it if you do. We have not the money to waste on luxuries. A child will sleep as well in this as in a painted cradle."

All at once, Anthony flushed to the roots of his hair. A thought had struck him, that if he bought a new cradle he must do so with his wife's money. He had nothing of his own. He was her pensioner. There stood at his side an old rusty bar of iron; in his anger and disgust he grasped this, raised it, and brought it down on the cradle, breaking down its side.

"Anthony!" exclaimed Urith. "Anthony! you would

not have done that had any love, any respect remained in your heart for me. You would have loved the little crib in which I was laid, if you loved me."

He did not answer her. Ashamed at his own conduct, embittered at her opposition to his wishes, discontented with his lot, he left the garret and descended the stairs.

On reaching the hall, he found Solomon Gibbs there; he had been out in the rain, and had come in very wet. His face was red and moist, proclaiming that he had been drinking, but he was not intoxicated, only hilarious. He had cast his hat on the table, a broad-brimmed felt hat that had absorbed the rain like a sponge, and was now giving it forth in a stream that made a puddle on the table and ran over the side, dripped on to a bench, and having formed a slop there fell again to the floor, there producing another pool. The water ran off Uncle Sol's dress and oozed from his boots that were rent, and had admitted water within, which now spirited forth from the gaps at every step. Solomon had taken down a quarter-staff from the wall, and was making passes, wards, and blows in the air at an imaginary opponent, and, as he delivered his strokes, he trilled forth snatches of song:

I'm a hearty good fellow, as most men opine,

Then whacked from right to left—

So fill up your bumpers, and pass round the wine,
Singing, Tol-de-rol-lol-de-rol.

He fell to the ward.

"Come on, Tony lad! 'Tis cursed moist weather, and no fun out of doors. I've been to the Hare and Hounds, but no one there, and not even I can drink when there be no comrades with whom to change a word. Come Tony, take a stick and let us play together, perhaps it will dry me, for I am damp, uncommon damp."

"Take your hat off the table," said Anthony, in ill-humour. He was accustomed to order and cleanliness in his father's house, and the ramshackle ways of Willsworthy displeased him; Uncle Sol was a prince of offenders in disordering and befouling everthing. "Take your hat off. We shall have the board spread shortly, and how can we eat off it when it is slopped over by the drainage of your dirty beaver?"

"Nay, Tony, boy; let it lie. See—here I be. I will stand on the defence, and you take t'other stick; and, if you beat me off, you shall remove my hat; but, if I remain master, you shall pull off my boots. Can't do it myself, by heaven, they be so sodden with water."

"I will make you both remove your hat and kick off your own boots," said Anthony, angrily. "Dost' think because I have married the niece that I am abased to be the uncle's serving-man? 'Fore heaven, I'll teach thee the contrary."

He went to the wall, took down a stick, and attacked Solomon Gibbs with violence.

Uncle Sol, for all the liquor he had drunk, was sober enough to be able to parry his blows, though handicapped by his drenched garments, which weighed on his shoulders and impeded rapid movement.

Anthony was not an accomplished quarter-staff-player: he had not a quick eye, and he had never possessed that application to sports, which would render him a master in any. Satisfied if he did fairly well, and was matched with inferiors, who either could not or would not defeat him, he had now small chance against the old man, who had been a skilful player in his youth—who, indeed, had stuck to his sports when he ought to have held to his studies.

The old man held the staff between his hands over his head jauntily—carelessly, it seemed—but with perfect assurance; whereas Anthony struck about at random, and rarely touched his antagonist. Anthony was in a bad temper—he faced the window; whereas Uncle Sol stood with his back to the light, and to the table, defending his soaked hat. Anthony was the assailant; whereas Sol remained on the defensive, with an amused expression in his glossy face, and giving vent at intervals to snatches of melody—showing his unconcern, and heightening his opponent's irritability, and causing him every moment to lose more control over his hand and stick.

Once Anthony struck Uncle Sol on the side, and the thud would have showed how dead with wet the old man's coat was, even had not water squirted over the stick at the blow.

"Well done, Tony! One for thee!" Then Mr. Gibbs brought his staff down with a sweep, and cut Anthony on the left shoulder.

The sting and numbness roused Anthony's ire, and *he made a* furious attack on his antagonist, which was

received with perfect equanimity and the hardly-interrupted strain of—

I sing of champions bold,
That wrestled—not for gold.

With ease, and without discontinuing his song, Sol caught a blow levelled at his skull, dealt with such force that Tony's hand was jarred by it.

And all the cry
Was Will Trefry,
That he would win the day,
So Will Trefry, huzzah!
The ladies clap their hands and cry—
Trefry! Trefry, huzzah!

Down came Sol's stick on his antagonist's right shoulder.

"There, there! You are no match for me," laughed the old man. "Will you give over—and pull off my boots?"

"Never!" shouted Anthony, and struck at him again, again ineffectually.

"Look out Tony! save your head!"

The old man by a dexterous backhanded blow struck up Anthony's staff, and with a light stroke he touched his ear. He had no intention to hurt him, he might have cut open his head had he willed; but he never lost his good-humour, never took full advantage of the opportunities given him by the maladroitness of his antagonist.

It was exasperating to the young man to be thus played with, trifled with by a man whom he despised, but who he felt was, at all events at quarter-staff, his master.

"Hah!" shouted Anthony, triumphantly. His stick had caught in Sol's wig, and had whisked it off his skull, but instantly the old man with a sweep of his staff smote his stick from the hand of Anthony, leaving him totally disarmed.

"There, boy, there! Acknowledge thyself vanquished."

Then the old fellow threw himself down on the bench, with his back to the table.

"Come, lad, pull off my boots."

"I will not," said Anthony, savagely, "you had unfair odds. You stood with your back to the window."

"I was guarding my hat. Leave it where it lies, dribble, dribble—drip, and take my place on the floor, and try another bout, if thou wilt. Come on, I am ready for thee."

Mr. Solomon Gibbs stood up, resumed his quarter-staff, and stepped into the midst of the hall. Anthony with his face on fire with annoyance and anger, stooped for his own weapon, and then took the place with the table behind him, where previously Mr. Gibbs had stood.

"Ready!" called Sol. "Come along! so be I."

Another bout, staves whirling in the air, feet dancing forward, backward, to this side, then to that.

Reports as of pistols, when the sticks met.

Anthony was no match for the old gentleman even now that he had the advantage of the light. Sol was *without* his wig, he had not resumed it, and his shaven

pate exhibited many a scar, the mark of former encounters in which he had got the worst, but in which also he had acquired his skill.

"My foot slipped!" said Anthony, as, having dealt an ineffectual blow from which Uncle Sol drew back. Anthony went forward to his knee, exposing himself completely to the mercy of his antagonist. "It is that cursed wet you have brought in—not fair."

"Choose a dry spot," said Sol.

"You have puddled the whole floor," answered the young man.

"Then it is equal for both of us. I have given thee many advantages, boy."

"I want none. I will have none."

His eye was on the old man's bald head; the sting of the blows he had received had exasperated him past consideration of what was due to an aged man, the uncle of his wife. The blows had numbed in him every sense save anger. He longed to be able to cut open that smooth round skull, and so revenge his humiliations and relieve his ill-humour. But he could not reach that glossy pate, not smite which way he would, so dexterous was the ward of Uncle Sol, so ready was his eye, and quick his arm in responding to his eye.

Not an advantage of any kind could he get over his adversary; he rained his blows fast, in the fury of his disappointment, hoping to beat down the guard by mere weight of blows; and Uncle Sol saw that Tony was blinded with wrath and had lost all sense of play, having passed into angry earnest. Then he twirled the

stick from Anthony's hand once more, so that it flew to the ceiling, struck that, and fell by the hearth.

Mr. Gibbs laughed. "Mine again, Tony, boy!" He cast himself into the settle by the fire, stretched forth his legs, and said, "Come, pull off my boots."

Anthony stood lowering at him, panting and hot.

> He strip't him to the waist,
> He boldly Trefry faced,
> I'll let him know
> That I can throw
> As well as he to-day!
> So little Jan, huzzah!
> And some said so—but others, No,
> Trefry, Trefry, huzzah!

Sol sang lustily, with his hands in his pockets and his legs extended.

"Come, lad, down on thy knees, and off with my boots."

Anthony did stoop, he went on one knee, not on both, and not to pull off the old man's boots, but to pick up his quarter-staff, whirl it round his head, and level a blow at the head of the undefended Uncle Sol; the blow would have fallen, had not Urith, who had entered the room at that moment, sprung forward, and caught it in her hand.

"Coward!" she exclaimed, "Coward!—my uncle! an old man! I hate you. Would God I had never seen you!"

He had hurt her hand, he saw it, for she caught it to her bosom, then put it to her mouth, but her *eyes glared at him* over her hand like white lightning.

"A scurvy trick, lad—did not think thee capable of it," said Uncle Sol. "Has he hurt thee child?"

He stood up.

Anthony flung the quarter-staff from him with an oath, put his hand to his brow, stood for a minute confronting Urith, looking into her fiery eyes, without exculpation, without a word. Then he turned, took up Uncle Sol's hat, without observing that it was not his own, flung it on his head, and went forth.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

INTO TEMPTATION.

NEVER is man so inflamed with anger, so overflowing with gall against others, as when he is conscious that he has laid himself open to animadversion. Anthony was bitter at heart against his wife and against her uncle, because he was aware, without being ready to acknowledge it, that he had acted ill towards both.

Why should not Urith have yielded at once to his wishes about the cradle? How obtuse to all delicate and elevated feeling she was to think that such a dusty, dingy, worm-eaten crib would suffice for his son, the representative of the house of Cleverdon—the child who was to be the means of reconciliation between himself and his father—the heir of Hall, who would open to him again the paternal mansion, and enable him to return there and escape from Willsworthy, a place be-

coming daily more distasteful, and likely to become wholly insupportable! That he had seen the cradle under disadvantage, in its abandoned, forgotten condition, and that it could be made to look well when a little feminine skill and taste had been expended on it, did not occur to him.

Moreover, his wife had no right to resist his wishes. He knew the world better than she—he knew what befitted one of the station his child would assume better than she. What might do for an heir to Willsworthy would be indecent for the heir to Hall—what might have suited a girl was not adapted to a boy. A wife should not question, but submit; the wish of her husband ought to be paramount to her, and she should understand that her husband in requiring a thing acted on his right as master, and that her place was to bow to his requisition. The old sore against his father that had partially skinned over broke out again, festering and hot. He was angry against his father, as he was against Urith. He was angry also with Mr. Gibbs for having proved a better man than himself at quarter-staff. Of old, Anthony had shown himself a tolerable wrestler, runner, quarter-staff-player, thrower of quoits, player at bowls, among the young men of his acquaintance, and he had supposed himself a match for any one. Now he was easily disarmed and defeated by a half-tipsy old loafer, who had done no good to himself or any one in his life.

He had gone down in public estimation since his marriage—he who had been cock of the walk. And *now he* was not even esteemed in his own house; re-

sisted by his wife, who set at naught his wishes, played with and beaten by that sot—her uncle.

There was no one who really admired and looked up to him any longer, except Julian Crymes.

He had wandered forth in the wet, without a purpose, solely with the desire to be away from the house where he had met with annoyance, where he had played —but this he would not admit, though he felt it—so poor a figure. He took his way to Peter Tavy, and went into the little inn of the Hare and Hounds at Cudlip Town, the first hamlet he reached.

No one was there. Uncle Sol had sat there, and tippled and smoked; but had finally wearied of the solitariness, and had gone away. Now Anthony sat down where he had been, and was glad to find no one there, for in his present humour he was disinclined for company. The landlord came to him and took his order for *aqua vitæ*, brought it, and seated himself on a stool near him. But Anthony would not speak, or only answered his questions shortly, so as to let the man understand that his society was not desired. He took the hint, rose, and left the young man to his own thoughts.

Anthony put his head in his hand, and looked sullenly at the table. Many thoughts troubled him. Here he had sat on that eventful night after his first meeting and association with Urith on the moor. Here he had sat, with his heart on fire from her eyes, smouldering with love—just as an optic-glass kindles tinder. Here he had drunk, and, to show his courage, had gone forth to the churchyard and had broken down her

father's head-post. He had brought it to this house, thrown it on this table—there! he doubted not, was the dint made by it when it struck the board.

How long was it since that night? Only a little over a twelvemonth. Did Urith's eyes burn his heart now? There was a fire in them occasionally, but it did not make his heart flame with love, but with anger. Formerly he was the well-to-do Anthony Cleverdon of Hall, with money in his pockets, able to take his pleasure, whatever it cost him. Now he had to reckon whether he could afford a glass before he treated himself to one, was warned against purchasing a new cradle as a needless expense, a bit of unpardonable extravagance.

He tossed off his glass, and signed for it to be refilled.

Then he thought of his father, of his rebellion against him, and he asked whether any good had come to him by that revolt. He, himself, was like to be a father shortly. Would his son ever set him at defiance, as he had defied his father? He wondered what his father was thinking of him; whether he knew how straitened his circumstances were, how clouded his happiness was, how he regretted the unretraceable step he had taken, how he was weary of Willsworthy, and how he hungered to hear of and to see Hall once more. There was little real conscious love of his father in his heart. He did not regret the breach for his father's sake, think of the desolation of the old man, with his *broken* hopes, his disappointed ambitions; he saw things *only as they* affected himself; he was himself the pivot

about which all his meditations turned, and he condoled with, lamented over himself as the worst-used of men, the man most buffeted by misfortune.

Anthony kicked the legs of the table impatiently. The host looked at him and smirked. He had his own opinion as to how matters stood with Anthony. He knew well enough that the young man was unlike Mr. Gibbs, was no toper; he had rarely stepped within his doors since his marriage. As the host observed him, he chuckled to himself and said, "That fellow will come often here now. He has a worm at the heart, and that worm only ceases to gnaw when given *aqua vitæ* or punch."

What if the old Squire were to remain obdurate to the end? What if he did not yield to the glad news that he was grandfather to a new Anthony Cleverdon? Anthony's heart turned sick at the thought. His son to be condemned to a toilful life at Willsworthy! But what if Urith should at some future time be given a daughter, then her estate would pass away from the young Anthony, and the representative of the Cleverdons would be adrift in the land without an acre, with hardly a coin—and Hall would be held by an alien.

He stamped with rage.

His father was possessed with madness; the whole blame fell on his father. Why was the old grudge against Richard Malvine to envenom the life of the son and grand-children of the Squire? By the course he took the Squire was not hurting the man whom he hated, who was in his grave and insensible to injury, but his own living direct descendants! He was stabbing at his

own family, in his insensate malice. Anthony thought over his quarrel with the old man, and he regretted that he had not spoken plainer, given his father sharper thrusts than he had—that he had not dipped his words in pitch, and thrown them blazing into his father's face.

His cheeks were burning; he clenched his fists and ground his teeth, and then bowed his hot brow upon his clenched hands. No doubt his father would hear how absurdly Urith had danced at the Cake's, and would laugh over it. He held up his head and looked round him, thinking he heard the cackle of his father, so vividly did his imagination portray the scene. No one was in the room save the taverner; but Anthony caught his eye fixed on him, and he turned impatiently away.

Urith was not—there was no blinking the matter—a wife suitable to him. He compared her with his sister. Bessie was sweet, gentle, and with all her amiability, dignified; Urith was rough, headstrong, and sullen. She was uncouth, unyielding—did not understand what were the tastes and requirements of a man brought up on a higher plane of refinement. He was weary of her lowering brow, of her silence, her dark eyes with a sombre, smouldering fire in them. He wondered how he could ever have admired her! He never would feel content with her. He had sacrificed for her the most splendid prospects that any man had, and she did not appreciate the sacrifice, and bow down before him and worship him for it.

He knocked over his glass and broke it. By heaven! *He wished* he had never married Urith.

Anthony stood up, and threw down some coin to pay for his brandy and for the broken glass. He had knocked over the glass in the gesture and start of disgust, when he had wished himself unmarried, and now —he must pay for the glass with money that came to him from Urith. He knew this, it made him writhe, but he quickly deadened the spasm by the consideration that for every groat he had of his wife, he had given up a guinea. She was in debt to him, and the ridiculous little sums placed at his disposal were but an inadequate acknowledgment of the vast indebtedness under which she lay.

He stood for a few minutes in the rain irresolute, uncertain in which direction to turn. Home?—To Willsworthy? To the repoaches of Urith, to the tedious jests and drawled-out songs of Mr. Gibbs? To the sight of Urith ostentatiously holding her hand in a sling to let him know that he had hurt her, when she intercepted the blow aimed at her uncle?

"Pshaw!" said Anthony. "She is not hurt, she cannot be hurt. She caught the stick in her palm. It stung her, no doubt, but will pass. But what an outcry and fuss will be made over it."

Yet his heart reproached him for these complaints. He knew that it was not the way with Urith to make an outcry and fuss. If he had hurt her, she would disguise the fact. Anyhow, he resolved not to go back to Willsworthy.

Should he go on to Peter Tavy, and visit his Cousin Luke?

No—he had no desire for the society of a parson.

Luke had married him to Urith; Luke was in part to blame for his present condition of dissatisfaction. Luke might surely, if he had poked about in his books, have discovered some canonical reason why the marriage could not have taken place, at least as early as it did. Then—with delay—his love might have abated, his head would have become cooler, he would have been better able to balance loss and gain.

"Loss and gain!" scoffed Anthony, "all loss and no gain!"

Luke would surmise that all was not right, he was keen-sighted—he had already had the impertinence to give an oblique admonition to Anthony to be tender and forbearing to his wife. If he went to him now. Luke would nail him, and hammer remonstrances into him.

By heaven! no—he wanted no sermons preached to him on week-days.

He walked to the door of Farmer Cudlip. The Cudlips had been on that estate much as the Cleverdons had been at Hall, for centuries, but the Cudlips had owned their own land, as yeomen, whereas the Cleverdons had been tenant-farmers. Now the Cleverdons had taken a vast stride up the ladder, whereas the Cudlips, who had given their name to the hamlet, had remained stationary. The Cudlips, though only yeomen, were greatly respected. Some of the gentle families were of mushroom growth compared with them. It was surmised that the Cudlips had originally been Cutcliffs, and that this yeoman family had issued from *the ancient* stock of Cutcliffe of Damage in North

Devon, and had gone forth like a scriptural patriarch and made itself a settlement on the verge of the moor, and called the land after its own name, but there was no evidence to prove this. It was at one time a conjecture of a Rector of Peter Tavy, who mentioned it to the Cudlip then at Cudlip Town, who shrugged his shoulders and said, "It might be for aught he knew." In the next generation the descent was talked of as all but certain, in the third it was a well-established family tradition.

Anthony stood in the doorway of the old ancestral farm. He had knocked, but received no answer; no one had come to the door in response. He knew or guessed the reason, for overhead he heard Mistress Cudlip putting the youngest child to bed; he had heard the little voice of the child raised in song, chanting its evening hymn:

> Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
> Bless the bed that I lie on.
> Four angels to my bed,
> Two to bottom, two to head;
> Two to hear me when I pray,
> Two to bear my soul away.

Probably Farmer Cudlip was not within. Had he been, the knock of Anthony would have been responded to by a loud and hearty call to come in.

Anthony did not repeat the knock. It was of no use his entering that house if the master were out; he did not want to pass words with women folk. But he halted where he was in order to make up his mind

whither he should go. He craved for—not exactly flattery, but something of that adulation which had been lavished on him by all alike—old and young, men and maids—when he was Anthony Cleverdon of Hall, and which had been denied him since he had become Anthony Cleverdon of Willsworthy.

Under the humiliation he had received in his own house, under the sense of disgrace which he had brought on himself, first by his anger over the cradle, and his breaking it down with a blow of an iron bar; then, by his hand raised over an old man, defenceless; he felt a real need for adulation. He could not hold up his head, recover his moral elasticity till he had encountered some one who did not flaunt and beat him down. Fox—should he go and see Fox at Kilworthy? Fox was his friend; Fox had a sharp tongue and could say cutting things that would make him laugh, would shake the moths out of his fretted brain. Yes, he would go to Kilworthy and see Fox.

As he formed this resolution he was conscious that he was false to himself. He did not want to see Fox. Fox would not look up to him with eyes full of loving devotion. Fox's colour would not flash to the cheek when he entered. Fox's pulses would not bound when his step was heard on the gravel. Fox would not in word encourage him to think well of himself, to esteem himself again as the old cock of the walk in plumage, instead of a wretched draggled fowl. No—he did not want to see Fox, but Fox's sister. He would go to Kilworthy to see, to hear Julian Crymes, but he repeated to himself—"I must have a talk with Fox."

Then he heard the little child's voice upstairs repeating the Prayer of Prayers after its mother.

"Forgive us our trespasses," said Mistress Cudlip.

"Tespusses," said the child.

"As we forgive them that trespass against us."

"As we 'give them——" a pause. The mother assisted the little one, and it completed the sentence.

"And lead us not into temptation."

"And lead us not——"

Anthony drew his cloak closer about him, shook the water from Solomon's hat, that he wore, and set it again on his head.

"Into temptation," said the mother.

"Lead us not into temptation," repeated the child. Anthony bent his head, and went out into the rain, went heedless of the warning that hammered at his heart, went wilfully—into temptation.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A COLD WOOING.

"GET yourself ready," ordered Squire Cleverdon, looking at Bessie across the table. "Your aunt is unwell, and I have sent word that we would come and see her. A wet day, and nothing better to be done, so we can find out what is the matter with her."

"Certainly, father," answered Elizabeth, with alacrity. "I hope nothing serious is the matter with her?"

"Oh, serious, no."

The manner of the Squire was never gracious to his daughter; always imperious, but this day there was a peculiarity in it that struck her. There was, she felt instinctively, something in the background.

"What is it, father? I pray you tell me. She is not in any danger?"

"Oh, danger? No." A twitching of his cheeks marked inner uneasiness.

Bessie looked anxiously at him. "I am sure, father, you are hiding something from me."

"Go at once and get ready! Do not stop chattering here like a parrot," he roared forth, and Bessie fled.

Elizabeth had no anxiety over the weather. That was not the day of umbrellas, but then, neither was it the day of fine bonnets. The skirt was worn short, and did not trail in and collect the mud. A woman pinned up her gown, or looped it at the girdle, exposing a bright-coloured petticoat, and below that her ankles, and there were many inches between the mud and the petticoat. A thick serge mantle covered gown and petticoat; it was provided with a hood that was drawn over the head, and bright eyes looked out of the hood and laughed at the rain and cold.

We sometimes wonder now how the world got on before the introduction of the umbrella. Very well. It was dryer, warmer, better protected in former days. It is only since the invention and expansion of the parapluie, that that marvel of millinery, the nineteenth-century bonnet, piled up of feathers and flowers, and bead and lace, became possible. The umbrella has *been a* bell-shade under which it has grown.

Mr. Cleverdon was not communicative during the ride to Tavistock. Now and then he growled forth a curse on the weather, but said nothing against Magdalen. This surprised his daughter, who was accustomed to hear him grumble at his sister if she occasioned him any inconvenience; but she charitably set it down to real concern for Magdalen, and this increased her fear that more was the matter with her aunt than her father chose to admit.

Aunt Magdalen really was indisposed; but the indisposition was partly, if not chiefly, due to her distress of mind about her niece. She knew that her brother had resolved to act upon her own advice to marry Bess to young Crymes, and that he expected his sister to help him to overcome any opposition that might be encountered from Bessie. Poor Elizabeth had as little suspicion, as she accompanied her father to Tavistock, that he was about to sacrifice her, as had Isaac when he ascended Moriah at the side of Abraham.

When Mr. Cleverdon and Bessie arrived at the house of Miss Magdalen, near the Abbey Bridge, they observed a man's hat and cloak hung up in the hall.

"Oh!" exclaimed Elizabeth, "the doctor is here! I am sure my aunt is really very ill."

At the same moment the side door opened, and the old lady appeared, and caught her niece in her arms.

"He is here," said Magdalen—"arrived only a minute before you."

"Who is here?" asked Bessie. "What do you mean?"

"Come aside with me into my snuggery," said her aunt. "I have a word with you before I speak with your father, and in the parlour he will find Anthony."

"Anthony! My brother!" with a joyful flash from Bessie; and she flung her arms round her aunt. "Oh, you dear—you good Aunt Magdalen! You have——"

"Have done with this folly," said the Squire, angrily. "Are you still such a fool as to think that when I say a thing I shall change about? No—your brother is not in there, but your bridegroom."

Miss Cleverdon put up her hand entreatingly to stop her brother, and hastily brought her niece into the adjoining room and shut the door.

"What is the meaning of this?" asked Bessie, with some composure. She had now a suspicion that the visit concerned herself, and not her aunt.

"My dear," said Magdalen, "do seat yourself—no, not in that chair; it is hard, and there is something wrong with the back—the bar comes exactly where it ought not, and hurts the spine—at least, I find it so. I never sit in it myself, never. Take that seat by the fireplace. I am so sorry there is nothing burning on the hearth, but, on my word, I did not expect to have you in here. I thought I might have spoken a word with you in the parlour before he came, or—but, bless my heart, Bess! I am so distracted I hardly know what I thought."

Bessie shook down her skirt over her dark blue petticoat, and seated herself where her aunt desired, then laid her hands in her lap, and looked steadily at Miss Cleverdon.

"You are not ill, then?" she said.

"Oh, my dear, ill! I have not slept a wink, nor had a stomach for aught. I should think I was indeed ill, but all about you. You must remember that the commandment with promise is that which refers to the submission of a child to the parent; but, Lord! Bess, I would not have you forced against your wishes. Your father's mind is made up, and he has met with a sore disappointment in the case of Anthony. I do think it will be a comfort to him, and heal over that trouble somewhat, if he finds you more pliant than was Anthony. But, Lord! Bess, nothing, I trust, hinders you — no previous attachment. Lord! I did at one time think that your heart was gone a hankering after Luke."

Bessie, who had become very pale, flushed, and said, "I entreat thee, aunt, not to have any fancies concerning me. I never gave thee grounds for any such opinion."

"I know that, I know that, child. But, Lord! an old woman like me must have her thoughts about those she loves and wishes well for."

"Aunt," said Bessie, "I think I can understand that my father desires to have me married, and has asked you to see me thereon. I have had some notions thereupon myself, but I would gladly hear from you whom he has fixed on, though, indeed, I think I can guess."

"It is Fox," answered Miss Cleverdon, and looked down on the floor, and arranged her stool, which was slipping from under her feet. "There, there, I have told thee; thy father put it on me. And I can only

say to thee that which thou knowest well thyself. He belongs to an ancient family, once well estated, but now sadly come down; nevertheless, there is something of the old patrimony remaining. He is thy father's friend's son; and as it has come about that the families that were to be united by my nephew have not been thus joined, it is not wonderful that your father would see them clipped together by thee."

"I cannot indeed take Fox," said Bessie, gravely.

"Well—well—the final choosing must be with thee, wench. All that thy father can do is to say that he desires it, and all I can do is to support him. God forbid that we should constrain thee unwilling, and yet a blessing does rain down from above the clouds on the heads of such children as be obedient. Now look to Anthony, and see if he be happy, having gone against his father's wishes."

"Is he unhappy?" asked Bessie.

"I do not think him the same at all. He is restless, and his mood has lost all brightness. I have not seen much of him, but what I have seen has made me uneasy concerning him, and what Fox tells me still further disconcerts me."

"I may not go to Willsworthy. I may not see my brother nor Urith—except by very chance I meet them," said Bessie, heaving a sigh, and her eyes filling. "My father seems no nearer forgiving than he was at first."

"I do not think that aught will move him to forgiveness save, perchance, the finding of ready obedience in thee."

"I cannot—indeed I cannot, in this," said Bess.

"Lord! I would not counsel thee against thy happiness," pursued Magdalen. "But see how ill it has worked with Anthony. He followed his own will, and went against the commandment of his father, and it eats as a canker into his heart, I can see that, now if thou——"

Then the door was thrown open, and the Squire appeared in it, with Fox behind his back in the passage.

"Sister," said old Cleverdon, "enough time has been spent over preparing Bess for what must be. As you have not brought her unto us, to the parlour, we've come in here to you. Come in, Tony! Come in! Look at her—there she sits; kiss her, lad! She is thine!"

But Fox did not offer to do what was required of him; Bessie started and drew back, fearing lest he should, but was at once reassured by his deprecatory look and uplifted hand.

"May I enter?" asked Fox.

"Come in, boy, come in!" said the old man, answering for his sister, as though the house were his own; and his own it might be considered, for it was paid for and furnished out of Hall; the maintenance of Miss Cleverdon fell on him and his estate.

"Come!" said the Squire, roughly, "shut the door behind you, boy. Go over beside her. Take her hand. Hold out yours, Bess. Do y' hear? It is all settled between us."

Fox entered the room, fastened the door, and remained fumbling at the lock, with his face to it, affecting great diffidence. Mr. Cleverdon took him by the

arm and thrust him away, and pointed imperiously to where Bess sat, near the fireplace, on which burnt no spark; her hands lay in her lap folded, and her eyes on the hearth. The window was behind her. The little room was panelled with dark oak that was polished. There were no pictures, no ornaments on the wall—only one oval pastille over the mantelshelf of Magdalen when she was a girl. The colour had faded from this, the pink gone wholly—it was a poor bleached picture of a plain maiden; and now beneath it sat one as blanched, for all the colour had gone out of Bessie's face, and she had assumed the same stiff attitude that her aunt had maintained when drawn by the artist.

Fox, with apparent reluctance, went over to the fireplace; Elizabeth looked at her father with great drops forming on her brow, as though the damp of the atmosphere condensed on that surface of white alabaster.

"Give him your hand. Are you deaf?"

Elizabeth remained with her hands folded as before, her eyes wide open, fixed reproachfully on her father. She had given her young life to him, borne his roughness, experienced from him no love, no consideration—in every way sacrificed herself to make his home happy, and now he cast her happines from him, gave her up to a man for whom she had no regard, without considering her feelings in the smallest degree. Then Magdalen looked at the crayon drawing of herself and down at Bessie, and some reminiscence at once painful and yet sweet in its bitterness came back to her—a remembrance, may be, of some sacrifice she had

been called to make when about Bessie's age, and the tears came into her eyes.

"Brother," she said, "you are too hasty. The poor child is overcome with surprise. You handle her too roughly. Tell her that her well-being is dear to you, tell her that this plan of yours has been considered by you as the best for her, but do not attempt to drive her, as you might a sheep into the fold to be shorn, with a crack of whip and bark."

"You keep silence, Magdalen," said the Squire. "You have had time to say what you would, and have, it seems, wofully mismanaged the task set thee. I ought to know how to deal with my children."

"Nay, brother, I cannot be sure of that, after what has fallen out with Anthony."

Magdalen regretted having made this sharp reply when it was too late to recall it.

"You understand me, Bess," said the old man; "I have let you see by the way in which I have treated that rebellious son of mine, that my wishes are not to be slighted, my commands not to be disobeyed. You do as I tell you. Give your hand to Tony Crymes, or else——"

Bessie's calm, steadfast eyes were on him. He did not finish his sentence.

"Or else, what, father?" she asked.

He did not answer her; he put out one hand to the table, leaned on it, and thrust the other behind him under the coat-tails. His brows were knit, and his eyes glittered into stony hardness and cruel resolve.

"I cannot obey you, father," said Bessie.

"You will not!" shouted the old man.

"Father, I neither will, nor can obey you, I have known Fox, I mean Anthony Crymes, ever since I have been a child, but I have never cared for him." She turned to Fox apologetically, even then, in that moment of trial and pain to herself, she could not endure to say a word that might seem to slight and give a pang to another. "I beg your pardon, Fox, I mean that I have never cared for you more than, in any other way than, as a friend, and as Julian's brother."

"Pshaw! What of that?" asked the old man, somewhat lowering his voice, and attempting to keep his temper under control. "Love comes after marriage where it did not precede it. See what love comes to when it is out of place before it, in your brother's case."

"I cannot promise Anthony Crymes my love, for I know it never will come. I am glad he is the friend of my brother, and as such I regard him, but I esteem him only for what merits he has in him. I never can love him—never—never!"

"Disobedient hussy!" exclaimed the old man, losing the slight control he had exerted momentarily over himself. "Am I to be set at defiance by you as well as by Anthony? By heaven, I did not think there was such folly in the family. It did not come from me—not from my side. I will be obeyed. I will not have it said in the town that I cannot have my own way with my children."

He looked so angry, so threatening, that Fox interfered. He slipped between Bessie and her father, and said,

"Master Cleverdon, I will have no constraint used. If you attempt to coerce Bessie, then I withdraw at once. I have known and loved her for many years, and would now have hardly dared to offer myself, but that you cast out the suggestion to me. I saw that Bessie did not love me, and I held back, hoping the time might come when she would, perhaps, be guided less by the feelings of the heart and more by the cool reason of the brain. If she refuses me, it shall be a refusal to me, to an offer made in my own way, with delicacy and consideration for her feelings, not with threat and bluster. Excuse plain-speaking, Squire, but such are my views on this matter, and this is a matter that concerns Bessie and me first, and you, Master Cleverdon, afterwards."

"Yes," said Magdalen, "your violence, brother, will effect nothing. You will only drive your remaining child from under your roof, as you drove Anthony."

"Be silent, you magpie!" shouted old Cleverdon, but he looked alarmed.

"Now," said Fox; "you have frightened and offended Bessie, and effected no good. Let her walk home, although it is raining, and I will accompany her part of the way, if not the whole, and speak to her in my own manner, and hear her decision from her own lips."

Bessie stood up.

"I am content," she said; "but do not for a moment think that my determination is to be changed. Have with you, Fox. Father, you will follow when your business in the town is over, and will catch me up. You said, I think, that you were going up to Kilworthy to see Mr. Crymes."

CHAPTER XXXV.

A WET WOOING.

Bessie and Fox walked side by side, but without speaking as long as they were in the street of Tavistock, with houses on both sides. Here there were, perhaps, more numerous puddles, more mud, than outside the town. Moreover, the water that fell on the roofs dripped or shot in streams down on the heads of such as ventured to walk near the walls, and the only escape from these cataracts and douches was in the well-worn middle of the street where the dirt was deepest because the roadway was there most trampled. The ducking from the descending shoots of water, the circumventing of the pools, caused the walk of the two to be no more than approximately side by side. No walk could be direct, but must consist of a series of festoons and loops; but on passing the last house, Fox came boldly up to the side of Elizabeth Cleverdon, and said—

"Bessie, I am at a disadvantage; who can play the lover in such weather, and how can I lay myself at thy feet when the road is ankle-deep in mire? I should sink into the slough of despond and the mud close over my head and back or ever I had an answer from thee."

"There can and will be no romance in the matter," answered Elizabeth. "It is to me a sad and serious business, for if there be truth in what you say—that *you* have cared for me, then am I sorry to disappoint

you; but, on my honour as a maid, Fox, I never suspected it."

"That may well be, for, Bess, thou art so modest," replied Fox Crymes. "Yet I do assure thee the attachment has been of long time, and has thrown its roots through my heart. Even now—or now most of all, would I have held my tongue had not thy father encouraged me to speak."

"Why most of all now?"

"Because now, Bessie, that thy brother Anthony is out of favour thou art an heiress with great prospects; and neither would I seem to make my suit to thee because of these prospects, nor to step into the place and profits that should have belonged to Anthony."

Bessie looked round at him gratefully.

"I am glad you think of Anthony," she said.

"Of course I think of him. He is my friend. None have mourned more than I at his estrangement from his father. It has affected him in many ways. Not only is he cut off from Hall and his father, but disappointment has soured him, and I do not believe he is happy with his wife."

"What!—Anthony not happy with his wife!" Bessie sighed and hung her head. She remembered the dance at the Cake's, Anthony's neglect of Urith, and the attention he paid to Julian. No doubt this had occasioned a quarrel when he reached his home. Poor Anthony! Poor Anthony!

"And now," said Bessie, gently—"now that we are quite alone together, let me assure you that though I am thankful to you for the honour you have done me

by asking for me, that yet I must beg you to desist from pressing a suit that must be unsuccessful. I can —after what you have said, and after the good feeling you have shown—I will, respect you. I can do no more."

"You have given your heart to another?" half-asked Fox, with a leer that she did not notice.

"No—no one has my heart, for no one has thought it worth his while to ask for it, except you; and, alas! to you I cannot give it."

"But, if it is still free, may I not put in a claim for it?"

"No—it can never be yours."

"I will not take such a refusal. At bob-apple any boy may jump for the fruit, till it is carried away. Your heart is hung up to be jumped for, and I will not be thrust aside, and refused permission to try my luck along with the rest."

"No one else will think of coming forward."

"There you are mistaken, Bess. Consider what you are now—at all events, what you are esteemed to be. You will inherit Hall and all your father's savings. Your father has made no secret of his determination to disinherit Anthony. He has told several persons that he has made his will anew, and constituted you his heiress, your husband to take the name of Cleverdon. This is known and talked about everywhere. Do you suppose that with such a prospect there will not be a score of aspirants ready to cast off their names and become at once the husband of the most charming girl anywhere in South Devon, and a rich Squire Cleverdon of Hall?"

Bessie was infinitely hurt and shocked. She to rob her brother of his birthright! God forbid!

"Fox," she said, "this can never be. If I should at any time become owner of Hall, I would give it up immediately to dear Anthony."

"But," said Fox, with a mocking laugh on his face, "is it not likely that your father knows what you would do, and will take precautions against it, by settling the estate through your husband on your eldest son? You could not, were the estate so settled, do as you propose."

Bessie was silent, looking down into the mud, and forgetting to pick her way among the puddles. The rain had formed drops along the eave of her hood, and there were drops within on the fringes of her eyes.

"You will be persecuted by suitors," Fox continued, "and I ask you, is there any you know about here whom you would prefer to me?"

She did not answer him, she was thinking, with her hood drawn by one hand very close about her face, that no one approaching, not Fox, might see her distress.

"Do not speak of others," said Bessie, at length; "sufficient to let things be till they come. I am, and you need not pretend it is not so—I am but a plain homely girl, and that will damp the ardour of most young men, who sigh for pretty faces."

"You do yourself injustice, Bessie. For my part I look to the qualities of the heart and understanding, and you have a generous and noble heart, and a clear and sound understanding. Beauty withers, such qualities

ripen. I never was one to be taken with the glitter of tinsel. I look to and love sterling metal. It was your good qualities which attracted my admiration, and, 'fore Heaven, Bess, I think you uncommon comely."

"I pray you," urged Bessie, "desist from your suit. I have told thee it is fruitless."

"But I will not desist without a reason. Give me a reason, and I am silent. Without one, I will press on. I have a better right than any of the unknown who will come about thee like horseflies after awhile."

"I do not love thee. Is not that a reason?"

"None at all. I do not see why thou mayest not come to like me."

Bessie walked on some way in silence.

Presently she said, in a plaintive, low voice, "I will give thee, then, a reason; and, after that, turn on thy heel and leave me in peace. I have——" Her voice failed her, and she stepped on some paces before she could recover it. "I tell thee this, Fox, only because thou hast been frank with me, and hast shown me a generous heart. My reason is this—and, Fox, there must, I reckon, be some confidence between two situated as we are—it is this, that long, long ago I did dearly love another, and I love him still."

"Now, Bessie!" exclaimed Fox, standing still in the road, and she halted also, "you assured me that you had given your heart to none."

"I have given it to none, for none asked it of me."

"I do not understand. You speak riddles."

"Not at all. Cannot a poor, ugly girl love a man —*noble,* wise, and good—and never let him know it,

and never expect that it will be returned? I have heard a tale of a Catholic saint, that he wore a chain of barbed iron about his body under his clothing, where it ate into his flesh and cankered his blood; but none suspected it. He went about his daily tasks, and laughed with the merry-makers; yet all the while the barbs were working deeper into him, and he suffered. There be many poor, ill-favoured—ay, and well-favoured—wenches like that saint. They have their thorny braids about their hearts, and hide them under gay bodices, that none suspect aught. But—God forgive me," said Bessie, humbly, with soft, faltering voice—"God pardon me that I spoke of this as a chain of iron barbs, festering the blood. It is not so. There is no iron there at all, and no fester whatsoever—only very long-drawn pains, and now and then a little pure, honest blood runs from the wound. There, Fox, I have shown this only to thee. No one else knows thereof, and I have shown it thee only as a reason why I cannot love thee."

Fox Crymes made a grimace.

Bessie stepped along her way. Fox followed.

Presently she turned, hearing his steps, with a gesture of surprise, and said, "What, not gone yet?"

"No, Bessie, I admire thee the more, and I do not even now give over the pursuit. I would yet learn, hast thou any thought that he whom thou lovest will be thine?"

"No! no! never; I do not desire it."

"Not desire it?"

"Nay, for he has loved another; he has never given me a thought. I must not say that. Kind and good

he has ever been—a friend; but he can and will be nothing more."

"There you mistake, Bessie. When he learns that you are the heiress to Hall his eyes will be wonderfully opened to your charms, and he will come and profess he ever loved thee." He spoke bitterly, laying bare his own base motives in so doing. But Bessie was too guileless to suspect him. She reared herself up; his words conveyed such a slight on the honour of Luke that she could not endure it.

"Never! never!" she said, and her eyes flashed through her tears. "Oh, Fox! if you knew who he was you would never have said that."

"But if he should come and solicit thy hand?"

"He cannot. He has told me that he loved another."

She resumed her walk.

Fox continued to attend her, in silence. He was puzzled what line to adopt. What she had told him had surprised and disconcerted him. That Bessie—the ordinary, plain-faced, methodical Bessie—should have had her romance was to him a surprise.

How little do we know of what passes under our very feet. Who dreamed of magnetic currents till the magnetometer registered their movements? Waves roll through the solid crust of earth without making it tremble at all; magnetic storms rage around us without causing disturbance in the heavens, and but for the unclosing of our eyes through the scientific instrument we should know nothing about them—have laughed at the thought *of* their existence.

"I must needs walk on with thee," said Fox; "for I cannot leave thee till thy father come and overtake thee. And if I walk at thy side, well—we must talk, at all events I must, for my tongue has not the knack of lying still behind my teeth."

Fox was at heart angry at his ill-success; he had hoped to have made a great impression on Bessie by the declaration of his love. She was but an ordinarily-favoured girl, as he knew well enough had never been sought by young men, always thrust aside, accustomed to see others preferred to herself—at a dance to be left against the wall without a partner, after church to be allowed to accompany her father home, without any lad seeking to attach himself to her and disengage her from the old man. To a girl so generally disregarded his addresses ought to have come as a surprise, and have been accepted with eagerness. He was in a rage with her for the emphatic and resolute manner in which she refused him.

"Let us talk of Anthony," said he.

"With all my heart," she replied, with a sigh of relief.

"Do you see any way in which your brother can be received again into favour?" he inquired.

She shook her head. "Nothing that I can say has any effect on my father. He will not permit me to go near Willsworthy."

"Then I can say what is the only way in which peace and good will may be brought back into the family. It lies in your hands to build a bridge between

your father and Tony. I am certain that in his heart the old Squire is discontented that things should remain as they are, but he has spoken the word, and he is too proud to withdraw it. If it could have come to pass that you took my hand, then I do not believe that your father would resist our united persuasion. See how much weight we could have brought to bear on him, how we could have watched our opportunities, how—if it should happen at any time that Tony should have a child, we might have brought it to the old man, set it on his knees, and then together have taken the right moment to plead for Anthony."

Bessie drew a long breath.

"I would do a great deal, almost anything to bring about what you speak of, but this means is beyond my power. It cannot be. I know now how good and faithful a friend you are to my dear, dear, brother Anthony. I must again speak very plainly. I do desire, Fox, in all ways to spare you a wound, but you will take no refusal. You said, 'Let us talk of Anthony,' and you work it round to the same point. I shall never marry; I cannot marry you; I shall take no one else. I pray you desist from your pursuit. You heard what Aunt Magdalen said, that my father, if he persisted, would drive me to run away, as did Anthony. It will be so. If my father will not accept my refusal, then I must go. I shall go to Anthony and his wife, or to my aunt. I could not swear what is false to you or to any one else. Before the minister of God I would not promise love, and love to my husband only, knowing *that I could* not love, for my love was elsewhere. No,"

added Bessie, shaking her head, "I must be true, always true, to myself, and before God."

As she spoke, both heard the clatter of horse's hoofs. They halted, parted, one on each side of the road, and looked back. A man was galloping along, with his head down against the rain, he did not look up, but remained bowed as he approached.

"Father!" called Bessie, for she recognized both the horse and the rider. He did not draw rein, apparently he did not hear her. Certainly he saw neither her nor Fox. Wrapped in his own thoughts, forgetful of his daughter, of his promise to take her up, he galloped past, and sent the mud flying from his horse's hoofs bespattering her as he passed.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

IN TEMPTATION.

ANTHONY entered the little parlour, or bower, of Kilworthy, at dusk. It looked comfortable and bright. A fire of logs burnt on the hearth, with turf thrust into the interstices between the logs, and the pleasant fragrance of the peat filled the room, without being strong enough to be offensive. Outside, everything was grey and moist and dull, within a red and yellow sparkle, and a sense of dryness. The walls were hung with good paintings, in silvered frames, richly carved. A crimson mat was on the polished floor, and embroidered crimson curtains hung by the window.

Julian was doing no work. She was sitting by the fire in a day-dream, in much the attitude that was assumed by Bessie at that very time in the little parlour of Aunt Magdalen's house, beside her cold, cheerless hearth.

Anthony had thrown off his wet cloak and sopped hat, and was fairly dry beneath them, he wore high and strong boots, and these he had made as clean as was possible on the mats before entering.

"How are you, Julian? Where is Fox?"

Julian started as he spoke. Her mind had been engaged on him, and the sound of his voice came on her unwelcome at that moment.

Sitting over her fire she had been considering her conduct, asking herself whither she was going, what was to be the end of her encouragement of Anthony.

She repeated to herself as excuse, that she had thrown the glove at Urith, and that the challenge had been accepted. The contest was a fair and open one; each used what weapons she had. If men might call each other out and fight, why not women also contend on their own special ground, in their own manner?

Urith had won in the first round, had carried off the prize, but in this second round, she—Julian—was beating her adversary. She could not take the prize over to herself, and wear it as her own; that she knew well enough; but she could render it worthless in the eyes of Urith—spoil irretrievably her pleasure in it.

Was she justified in pursuing her advantage? Was the result she would arrive at one to fill her with content? She would destroy the happiness of Urith,

perhaps that also of Anthony, break in pieces all domestic concord for ever in Willsworthy, to satisfy her own pride and revenge. She loved Anthony, always had loved him, but had sufficient cool resolution not to go a step with him beyond what she would allow herself, to establish the completeness of her triumph over Urith. She loved him out of pure selfishness, without the smallest regard for his well-being, hardly more compunction for the torture she was administering than has the child that plays with a cockchafer by thrusting a pin through it, attaching a thread to the pin, and whirling the insect round his head. But Julian was not suffered to proceed without some qualms of conscience, some warnings given by her better nature, and when Anthony entered, it was at a moment when she had almost resolved to give up the contest, satisfied with what she had gained.

Fox was out, answered Julian to Anthony's inquiry, he had gone into the town. Then she was silent.

Anthony went into the window, where was a box seat, and planted himself there, not looking at her, but looking away, at the door; and he took his knee between his hands. Both remained silent. He was weary, not with the length of his walk, but with walking wrapped in a cloak that had become heavy with moisture, and with the closeness of the day. He was, moreover, in no good mood, dissatisfied with himself, discontented with the world, and at a loss what to say, now that he found himself in the company of the girl he had come to see.

Julian pouted, and looked at the fire. The day,

with its continuous drizzle, had been one of tedium to her. She was not accustomed to work, like Bessie, whose hands were never idle. She took up some embroidery, tried to paint, attempted knitting, and threw all aside, after ten minutes, with restless impatience. She had taken a book in the afternoon, read a chapter, remembered that she had read the same book before, and cast it into the window seat. She did not even replace it on its proper shelf. Then she had fallen to her desultory musings, to listening languidly to her conscience, and answering its remonstrances evasively. She had, as already said, almost resolved to leave Anthony alone, and to be content with what mischief she had already done. But the resolution was no more than *almost* arrived at; for she had not the moral courage to make a final resolution to which she would force herself to adhere.

Anthony, on his side, had been spoiled; so, on her side, had Julian. He had been flattered and made much of as the heir to Hall; she had been treated in a similar manner as heiress to Kilworthy. Her mother had died early, her father was an unpractical political and religious dreamer, who had exercised no control over her; and she had been brought up chiefly by servants, who had fawned on her, and given her whatever she wanted. She was therefore wayward, wilful, and selfish, with no fixed principles, and no power of self-control—a feminine reflex of Anthony, but with more passion and latent force of character than he.

The two sat silent for full ten minutes, each looking in an opposite direction, and each with a shoulder

turned to the other. Anthony had come hoping to be received with pleasure; but Julian showed no alacrity in receiving his visit, and this helped to depress him.

Presently Julian turned her face over her shoulder, and said, "I suppose you do not know where Fox is, or you would not have come to his lair."

"Certainly I do not know."

Anthony looked at the window-glass. Either the fire had considerably heated the atmosphere of the room, or the wind without had veered northward and made the air colder, for breath had condensed on the glass. He put up his finger, and wrote on a pane "A. C." Without was summer twilight.

"I know, for he was too full of his plans to keep them from bursting forth at his mouth," said Julian.

"I dare be bound it was so," answered Anthony, listlessly; then on another pane he wrote "J. C."

"And you are not interested to know whither he has gone and what he seeks?"

"No," said Anthony. "I came here to see him. I found no one at Cudlip Town, and Sol Gibbs is dull company at Willsworthy."

"You have other company there than Sol Gibbs."

"Whom do you mean?"

"There is Urith—your wife," with a sharp flash of her eye out of the corner; and insensibly she put one knee up and hugged it, as did Anthony.

"Oh! Urith," he repeated, in a tone in which she discerned something like a sneer.

"Your wife."

"One cannot be talking to a wife all day," he said,

peevishly, and let fall his leg and loosened his plaited fingers. She instinctively did the same.

"Can you not? Oh, indeed, that is news to me. I should have thought that you would never have lacked material for talk. Flames, darts—hymeneal altars smoking."

He looked sullenly out of the window, turning his back to her, and made no reply. She waited for a response, then said,

"If not these subjects, then chickens and goslings."

He turned his head impatiently, and said,

"You are mocking me. You!—and I came here for comfort from you—you, Julian!"

There was pain in his manner and expression, and she was somewhat touched.

"Oh, Anthony, you said you had come here after Fox, and now you say you came to see me."

He passed his hand over his forehead to wipe away the drops formed there. He did not answer her, to correct the effect of his words, but put up his hand to the glass, and with a shaking finger drew on the diamond pane, between the initials, a lover's knot.

"Anthony," she said, after a pause, "I suppose I must tell you why Fox has gone into Tavistock, for it concerns you mightily, and you should not be kept in the dark concerning him. Do you recall what I said when we were dancing together at Wringworthy?"

"No, Julian, nothing. That was a bright and delightful dream. I have awaked out of it, and remember nothing."

"*I* told you that Fox had set his mind on Bessie

—your Bessie. You scouted the notion, but I spoke the truth. And he has been as open to his father and me thereon as is possible for him. You, Anthony, have a good and kind nature—you are too ready to trust any one. Always upright and straightforward yourself, never thinking evil in your heart, never putting forth a foot to trip up an enemy—certainly never a friend."

Anthony's head was raised. This was what he wanted—a few words of commendation came down as warm rays of sunshine on his depressed and drooping heart.

"You, Tony, have never mistrusted Fox, for it was not in you to mistrust any one. But I know his real nature. He is seeking his own ends. He has been over at Hall two and three times a week, and——" she laughed, "will you believe it?—has been cajoling the old man, your father, into the belief that it is possible he may win and wear me, as—as—" she hesitated. "As he was disappointed——"

Anthony turned and looked at her, and their eyes met. Hers fell, and he looked again hastily at the window pane—at the initials, and the lover's knot between them. The moisture had collected in the figures he had described, and had formed drops at the bottom of each downstroke.

"That is not all. Whether your father builds greatly on this or not I cannot say; but Eox has dangled the prospect before him, whilst he snatched at something for himself, even at Bessie, the heiress of Hall, now that you are thrown out into the wet and cold."

Anthony sighed involuntarily. Yes, he was out, indeed, in the wet and cold at Willsworthy—not metaphorically only, but actually as well.

"Now," continued Julian, "you shall hear the whole plan as worked out. Fox has gone in to-day to meet Bessie and your father at your Aunt Magdalen's house, and your aunt has been inveigled into uniting her persuasion to the commands of your father to induce Bessie to jump down the Fox's throat."

"It cannot be," said Anthony. "Bess will never —and she does not care for Fox."

"She may not have the power to resist. Girls have not the daring and independence of you men. When Fox has got his way, then he intends to change his name, and live at Hall with your father, who will resettle the property on him and his heirs, that so there may still be an Anthony Cleverdon of Hall."

"Never! No—never!" exclaimed Anthony, springing to his feet. "He cannot—he shall not do that. Fox will never play me such a base trick as that! Bessie never will lend herself to be made a tool of like that!"

"Bessie is true to you—that never doubt; but do not lean on my brother; he his false to every one."

"He never shall become a Cleverdon. What! Good heavens! He take my name, my place, my rights, my inheritance, my everything?"

"Not everything," said Julian, maliciously. "He does not stretch a hand for your Urith and for Willsworthy—only for what you tossed away as valueless."

Anthony uttered an oath, and cast himself back *where* he had been before, in the seat in the window,

and put his hands to his brow and clasped them there, leaning his head against the window sill.

Then, for some while, both remained silent, but Julian turned herself about in her seat to look at him.

Was that the same Anthony she had loved and admired? This dejected, sad man, with his head bowed, his face pale, and lined with trouble? It was certain that he was vastly altered. Her woman's eye detected a difference in his clothing. Formerly he had been ever dapper; without foppishness, his dress always of the best and well cared for; now it was old and worn, in places threadbare. Nor was it, though poor, yet with the merit of being attended to. Timely stitches had not been given where they had been needed, nor tags and buttons added that had fallen off. His boots were shabby and trodden down at the heel. The wet and dirt undoubtedly gave to them a special shabbiness on that day, but Julian could see that they were out of shape and past their best days. The trimness and gloss had gone out of Anthony's outer case, and his spirits within had lost as much, if not more. There was none of the ancient merriment, none of the self-conscious swagger, none of the old assurance of manner in him. He had become morose, peevish; he showed a diffidence which was the reverse of his former self. It was a diffidence mingled with resentment, the product of his consciousness that the world was turned against him, and of his bitterness at knowing this. Anthony's nature was one that required sunshine, as a peacock demands it that its beauty and splendour may appear. Come rain, and how the feathers clog and droop and

draggle—how squalid a fowl it appears! So was Anthony now—a faded disconsolate shadow of his old self, without the nerve to bear up against what depressed him, the adaptability to shape himself to his new surroundings.

As Julian looked at him she pitied him. Her love for him warmed her, and made her forget the cruelty of the part she was playing. The child of impulse, feeling this qualm of compassion, she rose and gently came across the room to him.

He heard her not, coming in her light slippers on the carpet, so engrossed was he in his wretched thoughts. Every one had turned against him—every one in whom he had trusted. His friend Fox, the only man who had seemed not to be affected by the general adverse tone of opinion, he had given him the most stinging blow of all. He was now at variance with his father, with his friend—if Bessie consented to take Fox, he could never regard her with esteem again; at home he had quarrelled with Uncle Solomon, and raised his hand against him; he had alienated from his wife; his aunt was in league against him; the servants at Willsworthy would take sides with their mistress. What wretchedness! what hopelessness was his! There was no one—no one but Julian who had a word of kindness, a spark of feeling for him. He heard the rustle of her gown and looked up.

She was standing by him, looking down on his ruffled hair, that hung over his hands, clasped upon his forehead. He hastily brushed away the scattered locks.

"Oh, Anthony!" she said, "what have you been doing here? What hast' drawn on the glass?"

He slightly coloured, put his hand to the panes and covered them.

"Nay," she said, taking hold of his hand, and drawing it away, "nay, let me read."

"I have writ," said he, bitterly, "what might have been, and then——" he gulped down his rising emotion, "then I had been——"

She stooped and kissed him on the brow, "Poor boy!"

Instantly he threw his arms round her neck and drew her face to his, and kissed her cheeks and lips, passionately. She—she alone remained to him—and yet—how far apart they were.

She sprang away with a cry.

The door was open, and in it stood old Anthony Cleverdon.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ANOTHER TEMPTATION.

ANTHONY rose, when he saw his father, with instinctive filial respect, but he did not look him in the face. He could not do this.

"Hah!" said the old man, entering the room, and closing the door behind him. "I had come here with an intent that is now set aside. I had come, Julian, to tell thee that it was yet in thy power to weld together the estates of Hall and Kilworthy, notwithstanding

what has occurred—that is, if thou wouldst overlook a certain disparity in years, and keep thine eyes fixed on the main advantage. But that is over. I am glad I came when I chanced, and in time to save me from running a great risk. Thou art too free with thy kisses, too lavish in thy love to please me."

He spoke as though what he said must whither Julian, crush her under the sense of her great loss. His assurance that she must be attracted by the same ambition as himself was so grotesque that Julian at once rallied from the confusion that had covered her, laughed, and said:

"You do me a mighty honour."

"Not at all—I decline to show you the honour."

"So much the better. When I walk through a wood I do not like to have the bramble claw at me. If it does, then I must turn and put my foot on it. Let the bramble hug the nettle, and not aim at the lady."

Her impudence staggered him.

"It is mighty sport," she continued, "to hear that little Hall desired to hitch itself on to the skirts of Kilworthy. But Master Cleverdon, if thou art in a marrying mood, prithee go to the next giglet fair, and choose thee there a wench."

Her insolence had its effect; the effect designed. Instead of being attacked by the old Squire, she was the assailant, and she hit him where she knew she could keenly wound him, so as to draw off his thoughts from what he had just seen. He was offended and angry.

"There," said she—"sit down in my seat by the fire. I meant no harm; but as you were absurd on your side, I made grimaces on mine. I am glad you are here, and face to face with Anthony, for, mayhap, I can persuade you to that which, unpersuaded, you were loth to do."

The old man was so angry that he did not answer her. He remained near the door, doubtful whether to retire or to come forward. He had not expected to meet his son there, and was unprepared for an interview; though hardly regretting it, for, in his bitter and resentful spirit, he was willing that Anthony should hear from his own lips what he designed—learn to the full the completeness of the severance between them.

"Whatever persuasion you may attempt," said he, looking at Julian, "comes at wrong time, after you have shown me that you are a person who, not respecting herself, deserves no respect from another, and after you have grossly insulted me. But I will listen to you, though I tell you what you say will not weigh with me as a feather."

"If that be so," laughed Julian, "I will spare myself the trouble. But look at your son; look at him calmly, and tell me whether I was wrong in pitying him, ay, and if, in consideration of old, tried friendship, that has been almost cousinship—so well have we known each other since childhood—was I so very wrong in lightly touching his brow with my lips, for from my heart I was sorry for him. Think what it would have been for you, when you married, had your father lived and treated you as you have treated Anthony! Is a

man to be cast out of every home because he has committed one folly? I dare stake my word that Anthony has rued his act almost daily; and is all his regret to count for nothing?"

"A man must take the consequences of what he has done."

"Julian, I do not wish you to plead my cause," said Anthony, coming before his father; "I will speak to him myself. I want to ask of him a question or two."

"I will answer them," said the old man. "Say on."

"I desire to know for certain whether you intend to give Bessie to Fox Crymes?"

"Yes, I do."

"And she consents?"

"All are not so disobedient as yourself."

"And if she refuses?"

"She will not refuse. I can but let her go, as I let you go. But she will not refuse; I have that to say to her which will make her give way."

"Then if she takes Fox, do you intend to take him into Hall?"

"Yes, I do."

"And under my name?"

"Certainly. He changes his name of Crymes to that of Cleverdon when he becomes my son."

"Then I tell you it shall not be. There shall not be another Anthony Cleverdon in Hall. I give you and Fox fair warning. There cannot—there shall not—be a supplanter in Hall bearing my name."

"We shall see."

"Yes, you shall see. Tell Fox what I have said."

"Tell him yourself. I will be no bearer of messages between you."

"Mr. Cleverdon," said Julian, "I cannot let you meet and part in my presence, spoiling all my pleasure in this little room for ever with the remembrance of this scene, without one more effort to bring you to agreement. Come, now—what if Anthony returns to you?"

"Returns to me?"

"Yes, what if he throws up all connexion with Willsworthy? He is wretched there—poverty-stricken. He is unhappy in a hundred ways. Look at his face. Where is the old brightness—where the old pride? He has lost all the ancient merry Anthony, and is now a sad one. Let him come back to Hall, and leave Urith to manage with her uncle—to manage or mismanage—as before, till all goes there to pieces. He has committed a boyish folly, and he knows it. He has thrown away gold for dross, and he has found it out. He will now be twice the Tony to you that he was. Then he was thoughtless, was careless, and devil-may-care; now he has learned a lesson, and learned it so sharply that he will never forget it again. He has learned what disobedience costs—what it is to go against a father—what boy's fancies are compared with matured plans in the head of a man. Give him that chance. Come, you do not know Fox as I know him. Take him into your house, and he will not be more dutiful to you than has been your own Tony. He will make you unhappy, and your Bessie wretched. I saw by Tony's

face, when he came here, that he had quarrelled with his wife. He came here because his home was hateful to him—because it was unendurable for him to be there any more. We cannot retain him here. Let him go to thee, and there will be an end to Fox and his story with Bessie. Anthony will be dutiful and loving henceforth, and cling to thee, and esteem thee, as he never clung to thee and esteemed thee heretofore."

Anthony was speechless. The blood rushed into his face. Everything might be as it was—or almost everything.

Old Anthony Cleverdon stood irresolute.

He had misgivings relative to Fox. One crafty, malevolent nature mistrusts another of the same quality. His daughter's peace of mind troubled him little, but he was by no means certain that Fox, once in the house, might not presume, and that there would not be sharp contests between them. Moreover, when Fox was there, married to his daughter, his place would be assured, and the old man could not well drive him from it. There were other reasons which made the old Squire feel that, to some extent, Fox would be unassailable, and might be eminently disagreeable.

The suggestion made by Julian was inviting. In the depth of his heart lurked love for his only son; his old pride in him was there, and was wounded and sore with the spectacle of the lad humbled, sinking out of men's favour, and out of his old dignity. He now looked at him, and saw what an alteration had taken place in him—how oldened and worn in face he was, *how* shabby in his clothing.

"Do you know, Mr. Cleverdon," pursued Julian, "why it was that poor Tony caught me by the neck and kissed me? It was because he was so utterly forlorn and disconsolate; he had lost all his friends, his heart was void through bereavement from his father; he was estranged from that Jacob, that supplanter, Fox; he saw his own sister turning against him, and—I doubt not he has not found that solace and sufficiency in his own home that would make up for these mighty losses. He held me, because he had none other. I do not want him, I have no right to him—let me cast him off—but only on to his father's bosom, into his father's arms."

The old man went to the window and looked forth into the twilight. His face was agitated. He must have time to consider.

Anthony, moreover, remained mute, and his face was troubled. A terrible temptation was presented to him. He believed that now, were he to throw himself at his father's feet, take his hand, and ask his forgiveness, the old man would receive him back at once into favour on the terms proposed by Julian. That he would forgive him on any other, he might not expect. That he knew full well.

And the old man saw that an opportunity was offered to deal the most insulting and cruel stroke to the daughter of the man who had incurred his undying hatred. He could by a word rob her of her husband, of the prize she had laboured to win, but which he could prevent her from retaining.

To Julian was offered the most complete and open

triumph over her enemy. A triumph more complete than she could have hoped to gain. Anthony could be nothing to her, he would remain as a friend, that was all; but she would see, and show to Urith, her threat made good, to wrench Anthony away from her.

Anthony stood with downcast eyes. The temptation was a strong one—strong to a young man who had been humoured and allowed to have his own way uncontrolled, allowed to follow his pleasure or whim without hindrance. He could not return home without having to face his wife, angered and resentful, without having to acknowledge himself to have been in the wrong. Anthony Crymes was playing him a treacherous and cruel trick, and here was a chance offered him of at once recovering his old position, wiping out his past mistake, and discomfiting Fox when on the eve of success. Was he sure that he could ever be on the same terms as before with Urith? Had she not been gradually estranged from him, till she had declared to him that she hated him, that she wished she had never seen him? Would it not be a relief to her to be rid of him, to be spared any more domestic broils?

Old Anthony Cleverdon was at the window, and as he stood there he marked the initials drawn on the fogged glass, and turned and looked at his son. Young Anthony noticed the look, and observed what had attracted his father's attention. He moved hastily to the window, and his father drew away, went to the fireplace, and rested his elbow against the mantel-shelf and fixed his eyes intently on his son. So also did Julian. Both *saw that* the moment was a crucial one. The young

man was forced to make up his mind on a point which would determine his whole after-life. It was more than that, it was a crucial moment in his moral life. He must now take a step upwards or downwards, in the path of right or that of wrong. This neither Julian nor his father considered, intent only on their selfish ends. But this appeared clearly to Anthony. His inner consciousness spoke out and told him plainly where went the path of duty and where lay the deflexion from it. But the path of duty was a painful one, full of humiliations, promising no happiness, only a repetition of contests with a sulky wife, and jars with the foolish Solomon Gibbs, of struggle against poverty, of labour like a common hired workman, of loss for ever of his old position, and deprivation of all the amusements that had filled his former life.

He and Urith did not suit each other. His temperament was sanguine, his spirit mirthful; he was sociable, and full of the sparkle of youth; whereas she was moody, almost morose, had no humour and laughter in her soul, brooded over imagined wrongs as well as those that were real, and could as little accommodate herself to his mood as could he to hers. Surely it were best, under such circumstances, that they should part.

Now Anthony was standing at the window where he had stood before when he drew those initials on the panes, in the place occupied recently by his father. So full was he of his thoughts, of the rolling of conflicting waves of feeling, that he forgot where he was, forgot the presence of his father and of Julian—the very sense

of the lapse of time was gone from him. Though he looked through the window, he saw nothing.

Then, all at once, uncalled for, there broke and oozed forth in his heart the old vein of love which had been filled with so hot and full a flood when he was Urith's suitor; he saw her with the old eyes once more, and looked in mental vision once more into the sombre eyes, as he had on the moor, when he lifted her into his saddle, and there came over him that sensation of mingled love and fear. It seemed to him that now only did he understand the cause of that fear; it was fear lest he himself should prove a wreck through lack of love and devotion to her. He thought now of how, after their wedding, on his coming to Willsworthy, he had taken her in his arms, how her dark head had lain on his bosom, and he had stooped and kissed her brow, and she had looked up into his face with eyes expressive of perfect confidence, of intensest love. He thought now how he had forced her against her will, against her conscience, to marry him prematurely, after her mother's death, and against the dying command of that mother. He thought how that he had lived on her estate, had been, as it were, her pensioner. He thought also of the efforts she had made, efforts he had perceived, to accommodate herself to him, to meet his humour, to overcome her own gloom, to struggle against the bad habits of slovenliness into which the household had fallen, and to correct her own want of order, because she saw it pained her husband. She had done a great deal for him, and what had he done for her? Grumbled, been peevish, disappointed her. He recalled

that evening at the Cake's, where he had slighted her. He thought of how he had trifled with his old regard for Julian, allowed her to lure him away from his wife, and had let her see that he was no more at one with Urith, and that he wished he could have undone the marriage and retied the old threads that had bound him to Julian. She—this Julian, had been playing with him—she, for her own ends, had been making mischief between him and his wife—and what had he done?

His eyes were opened, and he saw the initials on the glass, and the love-knot between them.

With the blood surging to his brow and cheeks, and a fire in his eye, he raised his hand, and angrily brushed his palm over the three panes, effacing utterly the characters there inscribed, then he remained with uplifted hand and forefinger extended, still as in dream, unconscious that he was being watched.

A new thought had occurred to him—that he was about to become a father.

A father! and he away at Hall, whilst the deserted Urith sat at Willsworthy—wan, with tears on her cheek, drip, drip, over the cradle he had treated so insultingly —her cradle, which he had deemed unworthy of his child, and which, for all that, with his child in it, he was inclined to abandon!

Then the blood went out of Anthony's face, went back to his heart, as he grew pale and still with the thought of the infamy of the conduct that had been his, had he yielded to the temptation.

And tears, tears of shame at himself, of love for Urith, of infinite longing for that little child that was

to be his, and to nestle in his arms, filled his throat and choked him. With a trembling finger on another clouded pane he drew an U and interlaced with it an A, twisting and turning the initials about, weaving them inextricably together, till the U was lost in the A, and the A confounded with the U.

He could not speak. He did not look round. With his eyes fixed before him, and his mind full of the thoughts that opened to him, he went out of the room, out of the house, and spoke to no one.

But old Anthony and Julian knew his decision—knew it from his finger-writing on the little diamond-pane.

Yet the old man would not accept it—he called after his son.

"I give thee three days. I will do no more for three days in the matter."

But Anthony did not turn his head or answer.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ON THE ROAD.

Fox Crymes walked on towards Hall with Bessie. He could not well leave her to take the rest of her course alone, after the old man, her father, had ridden past, forgetting her, and leaving her to make her way home without him. They therefore walked on together, speaking at intervals and disconnectedly to each other, *Bessie feeling* the irksomeness of her position, and he

unwilling further to jeopardize his suit by pressing it on her any more. He had said what was sufficient, and he left the father to use pressure to force her to comply with his wishes.

The two had not, however, proceeded more than a mile before they saw Squire Cleverdon riding back to meet them. He had recalled his promise before he reached home, and then remembered having passed two persons whom he did not particularly observe, but whom he concluded were his daughter and Fox.

The first impression he had received from Anthony's conduct was that he put the offer from him altogether; and yet, on further consideration, he persuaded himself that he had been mistaken. Had Anthony finally decided to reject his offer, why had he not said so in words? The old man's nature was coarse—he could not understand the struggles of a generous mind and resistance to mean motives. Anthony had not spoken, because he did not choose to speak before Julian, because he thought it seemly to affect difficulty of persuasion, because he wanted time in which to consider it, because—because—the father could find many reasons why Anthony should not immediately close with the proposal.

The more the old Squire turned the matter over, the more obvious it became to him that Anthony would do as he wished. It was inconceivable to him that he should persist in a course of opposition to his best interests. The boy was proud; but he had learned, by sore experience, that pride brought to misery. He had tried his strength against his father's—had shown what

he could do; and now, if he gave way, he was not humiliated. Why, in the Civil Wars, when Salcombe Castle was held by Sir Edmund Fortescue for five months against the Roundheads, and held after every other fort in the country had been taken or had surrendered; and then, when starved into yielding, it was on the most honourable terms, and Sir Edmund marched forth with all the honours of war bearing away with him the key of the castle he had so gallantly defended. This was no disgrace to him, it was a proud act of which all Devon men would speak with elation. Why then should not Anthony surrender? He should march forth with flying colours, and it would be no blow to his self-respect, no jar to his pride. The old man, having worked himself into the conviction that his case was won, was full of elation, and, with the petty spite of a mean mind, he resolved at once to show Fox he had no longer need of him. Then it was that he remembered that Fox and Bessie were to walk towards Hall till he caught them up, and he turned his horse's head and rode back till he met them.

"Heigh, there!" shouted the old man; "how goes the suit, Tony Crymes? Hast thou won her consent?" He paused for an answer.

"Her mother brought her naught," he continued, when Fox remained silent, not well knowing what answer to make.

"That I know," said Fox; "but he who wins Bessie Cleverdon wins a treasure."

"I am glad thou thinkest so. I hope that will satisfy thee. Come, Tony, lend a hand to the maid's *foot,* and help her up on the pillion behind me."

Fox obeyed; the dirty road had soiled Bessie's boot, so that he could not preserve a clean hand.

"Find her heavy, eh?" asked the Squire, in a mocking tone. "Much gold and many acres stick to thy hand when thou puttest it forth to her, eh?"

Fox looked questioningly at the old man. His tone was changed.

"Bessie will bring luck that will adhere to whatever hand holds her," said the young man.

"No doubt—no doubt," said the Squire. "You may walk at our side, and I will have a word with thee. Come on to Hall if it give thee pleasure. The road is well known to thee, thou hast trod it many a time of late. I doubt but soon thou thinkest to set up thy home there, and not to have to run to and fro as heretofore."

Fox looked again inquiringly and uneasily at the old man. He did not understand this new style of banter.

"Thou hast helped Bessie now into pillion, and I suppose thou art reckoning on the stuffing of the pad on to which thou thinkest her hand will help thee up, eh?"

Fox, usually ready with a word, was uncertain how to meet these sallies, and still remained silent.

The old man rode on, casting an occasional glance, full of cynicism, at young Crymes, who walked at the side of the horse.

Fox would not return till he was enlightened on this change in his manner; nor would he say much, resolving on silence as the best method of forcing old Cleverdon to show what was in his mind.

"What dost' say to Anthony coming home?" asked the Squire of his daughter, turning his head over his shoulder.

"Anthony—is he really coming to Hall?" gasped Bessie, her heart leaping with gladness.

"It will be a pleasure to thee to be able to retain the name of Crymes," sneered the Squire, turning to the walker. "A fine, ancient, gentle name; thou did'st doubt about exchanging it for one less venerable—that of Cleverdon, though of better sound, and the name that goes up, whilst Crymes goes down?"

Anthony Crymes's colour changed. "I do not understand what you aim at," he said, in uncertain tone.

"Nay, there is naught hard to be understood in what I say. If Anthony should come back to me, then there will be no need for Tony Crymes to spend some forty guineas to obtain license to call himself Cleverdon."

"Then Anthony is coming back! Oh, father!" exclaimed Bessie, "this is glad tidings." She disregarded all his hints and allusions to her marriage with Fox.

"This it is—you, Bess, say you are pleased to hear it, and I am very sure it will delight Tony Crymes. This it is—my Anthony has had the offer made him by me that he shall return to Hall, and all be forgiven and forgot that was between us."

"Oh, father, and you will receive Urith!"

"Not so fast, Bess. Anthony comes back, but never, *never* will I suffer that hussy to cross my threshold. I

swore that when he married her, and I will not go from my oath. No—Anthony returns, but not with that creature —that beggar wench. He comes himself. He comes alone."

"He cannot, father; he cannot—she is his wife."

"She is, as his madness made it to be—she is his wife. But he is tired of the folly; he repents it. He will be glad to be quit of her. He comes back to me, and she remains in her beggary at Willsworthy."

"Never, father! never. Anthony could not have agreed to that."

"I tell thee he did; that is, he has almost agreed to it. He did not close with the offer I made at once, but, for appearance sake, made some difficulty—yet only for appearance sake. I have given him three days, and in that time he will have let the matter be noised abroad, have broken his intention to the girl, and have made himself ready to return to me."

"Father!" said Bessie, in a voice choked with agitation, "I can never regard—never think of Anthony again in the old way, if he do this. He must not leave his wife. He swore before God to hold to her in poverty or in wealth till death, and thou wilt make him forswear himself."

"His first duty he owes to me—nay, he owes it to himself, to return from the evil ways in which he has gone. Heaven set him in Hall, and he went against Heaven when he left it; now he is the prodigal that has been among swine, but comes back to his father. That is Scripture—that is the Word of God, and stands before all foolish words said in oath, without weighing what they meant."

Fox Crymes caught the bridle, and stayed the horse.

"Is this jest, or is it earnest?" he asked, huskily.

"It is most serious and solemn earnest," answered the Squire.

"Then I insist on a word with thee, and I will hold the bridle till thou dismount. I will not let thee go on till I have spoken alone with thee. Let Bessie go forward, we must say somewhat together."

Squire Cleverdon had no whip, so he struck spurs into the flanks of his horse; but Fox held the rein, and, though the beast plunged and kicked out, he would not let it break away. Bessie was almost thrown off, and in her danger threatened to drag her father with her.

"Nay, thou shalt not escape me," said Fox. "Dismount, Master Cleverdon, and tell me plainly what this new matter is between thee and thy graceless fool of a son, or I will make the horse fling thee into the mud, and perhaps break thy neck."

The old man thought it best to comply, and, growling, he dismounted. Then Fox let go his hold of the rein, and bade Bessie ride forward beyond earshot.

"What is the meaning of this?" asked Fox, who was livid with rage and mortification, so livid, that had there been day instead of twilight, it would have been seen that the freckles on his face stood out as black spots on the hide of a coach-dog. "It is ill to trifle with me. I was to have your daughter, and succeed to Hall, I was to take your name, and step into all the rights forfeited by Anthony. You brought me face *to* face with Bessie at her aunt's, and then sent me

walking back towards Hall with her, to press my case. When all is nearly over, then you turn round, cast me over, and reinstate that son who has maltreated and half-blinded me, and make a mock of me for my pains?"

"It is you who have trifled with me," retorted the Squire, with less heat, but more bitterness. "You told me that you would urge my suit with your sister; you brought me weekly accounts of how she was becoming more disposed to think of me, you flattered and encouraged me, and all the while you knew——"

"I knew what? I knew nothing, save that you are old, and she young."

"That is not it," said the Squire, peevishly, "that is not what I refer to. You knew that she was encouraging my son, and that the old attachment that subsisted before this hateful affair with Urith Malvine had reasserted itself."

"It is false," answered Fox, furiously, "not content with making your sport with me, you insult my sister."

"I suppose you will not dispute the testimony of my own eyes," sneered old Cleverdon.

"And to what do they bear testimony?"

"To what I said. I entered the parlour where they were, she standing over him, at the window; he seated, with his arms thrown about her neck, kissing her, and above them on the glass, scrawled by his finger, their initials woven together, with a true lover's knot."

Fox glared at him, in speechless wrath.

"Now—what say you to that?" asked the old man. "With such proceedings, allowed, connived at in your

house, I am to be lured on to offer myself to your precious sister, and then to be laughed at, and scouted for my folly—a folly into which you were drawing me."

"It is false"—that was all Fox could say, so disconcerted, so choked was he with rage.

"It is not false. I have but just come from your house, and saw that, and because I saw it, I made overtures to Anthony to return. It was clear to me that all the fever of fancy for that hussy at Willsworthy was dead as ashes. That the reputation of Julian will need looking to, should he return to me, and be separate from Urith, is naught to me."

"He has enough to answer to me without this," gasped Fox. Then, by an effort, he steadied his voice and resumed his usual manner. "Now," said he, "let us have all brought into measure and rhyme between us. You tell me that Anthony comes back to Hall and abandons his wife."

"Aye! That is my offer to him. Let him leave Willsworthy and return to me, and all shall be forgiven. 'Tis a misfortune that he cannot be rid of his wife, but the tie by law alone will remain. She shall never be mentioned between us."

"And he agrees to this?"

"I have granted him three days to consider. In three days he gives me his answer, but who can doubt what that answer will be? Is not he wearied with his toy? Has he had good cheer at Willsworthy? Has he aught there now to retain him?"

"And what about Bessie?"

"Oh! you are welcome to her, as I said before; but

after my death Hall will go to Anthony, only the reversion to thee and any child thou hast by Bess. Should my Anthony survive Urith and marry again, then to his son by his second wife, never—that I have ever maintained—never to any child of his by Urith Malvine."

Fox laughed contemptuously.

"A poor prospect for Bess and her husband."

"A poor prospect, mayhap, but the only one on which they can look through their windows when they set up house together."

"And what allowance will you make Bessie when she marries?"

"But a trifle—I cannot more."

"So her husband and she are to live on the expectation of succession should they survive Anthony, and should Anthony not be remarried."

"That is all."

"But what if Anthony refuses your offer?"

"Then all remains as before. He will not refuse."

"I will hear that from his own mouth. Where is he?"

"I did not overtake him on the road. He has not yet left the town. I doubt not he has gone to his Aunt Magdalen."

"One word more. Hold up your hand to Heaven and swear that he dared—dared to put his arms round and kiss my sister! He—he—Anthony Cleverdon!"

"I will do it! It is true!"

Fox remained in the midst of the road, and his hand convulsively caught and played with his hunting-

knife that hung to his belt. His red, thick brows were knitted.

As old Cleverdon looked at his mottled face, he allowed to himself that Bess would have bad taste to choose such an one wittingly; and that, unwilling, it would take some compulsion to drive her to accept him.

"And, if Anthony does not come within three days, all remains as heretofore?" again asked Fox, looking furtively up at the father, and then letting his eyes fall again.

"Yes, all as heretofore. Should he dare to disappoint me in this, not a thread from my coat, not a grass-blade from my land, shall fall to him."

Fox waved his hand. "That will do," he said, and turned away.

He was at the junction of the road or track that led from Willsworthy with the main highway along which Squire Cleverdon had been riding. He remained at this point, waiting till the old man had remounted, and had trotted away, with Bessie behind him. There he stood, still playing with the handle of his hunting-knife, his red, lowering brows contracted over his small eyes, watching till the riders disappeared over the hill. Then he turned along the trackway that led to Willsworthy, with his head down against the drizzling rain, which had come on again, after having ceased for an hour; which came on again thick, blotting out the scenery—all prospect within a hundred feet, as effectually as though veils of white gauze had been let down out of the heavens, one behind another.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

TWO PARTS OF A TOKEN.

ANTHONY had, as his father surmised, gone to see his Aunt Magdalen. His heart was soft within him—softened at the sense of his own unworthiness, and with the return flow of his old love to Urith. And as he did not desire at once to go back to Willsworthy, and at the same time remembered that some time had elapsed since he had seen his aunt, he went to her house. There he found his grandmother, Mistress Penwarne. Some of the bitterness of the old woman seemed to be rubbed away. Perhaps daily association with the gentleness of Luke Cleverdon had done this.

She was in tears when Anthony entered. Magdalen had been talking with her over the plan mapped out for Bessie, to the complete, final exclusion of Anthony from return to his father's house.

"Now—now does the righteous God pay back to old Anthony Cleverdon all the wrong he did my daughter," she said. "See—drop for drop of gall. Where there fell one on my child's heart, his own son spirts a drop on to his father's heart. There is retribution in this world."

"Oh, Mistress Penwarne," remonstrated Magdalen. "How can you take delight in this?"

"I delight only in seeing justice done," answered the old woman. "You hold with your brother—naturally

—to some extent; but you never loved my daughter. You never showed her kindness——"

"Indeed, now," interrupted Magdalen, "there you do me a wrong. It was Margaret who would not suffer me to enter the house and be of any consequence more in Hall, who withstood me when I would draw near to my brother."

"She had no power to withstand any one. That you know full well. She weighed naught with her husband. But let that be. If you sinned against her, God is bringing the whip down on your shoulders as well, for I know that what is now falling out is to you great pain and affliction."

"That it is indeed," sighed Magdalen.

"Anthony is used by the hand of Providence as its rod with the father; Heaven rewards on the proud Squire of Hall every heart-ache, every humiliation to which he subjected my child. You know not how I have prayed that I might be suffered to see the day when the rod should fall and beat and bruise the back of the offender."

"You do not reckon," said Magdalen, "that the chief suffering falls, not on my brother, but on your daughter's son. Is not Anthony the very image of his mother? Has he not her eyes and hair—all the upper part of his countenance? Does not her blood run in his veins? You have desired revenge on my brother, and you have got it through the breaking to pieces of your own grandson."

Mistress Penwarne was silent. It was as Magdalen said.

"*Yes, and* whom does Bessie resemble most? She

has none of the handsomeness of your Margaret. It is true that she is her child, but she has inherited the plain homeliness of the Cleverdons. Look at yonder picture over the mantel-shelf. That was drawn of me when about her age. Does she not so resemble me at that time that you would say she had taken nothing of the Penwarnes, that she was altogether and only Cleverdon? Yet to her will come Hall. She will be mistress there, and to her child it will descend, to the utter exclusion of Anthony. Nay, I cannot think that the judgment of God, to which thou appealest ever, is falling all to thy side in its weighted scale."

The old woman was about to answer, when Anthony entered. He was pale, and his pallor reminded her of her daughter as the wan picture recalled Bessie. Mistress Penwarne rose from her chair and stepped up to him, took him by both his hands, and looked him steadily in the face. As she did so great tears formed in her eyes and rolled down her wrinkled cheeks.

"Ah!" said she, seeing in him her dead daughter, and her voice quivered, "how hardly did the Master of Hall treat her, but Magdalen—aye, and Bessie—know that better than thou. He was rough and cruel, and now thou hast felt what his roughness and cruelty be —now thou canst understand how he behaved to thy poor mother; but thou art a man and able to go where thou wilt, fight thine own way through the world, carve for thyself thine own future. It was not so with my poor Margaret. She was linked to him—she could not escape, and he used his strength and authority and wealth to beat and to torment and break her. And

Margaret had a spirit. Have you seen how a little dog is mended of lamb worrying? It is attached to an old ram—linked to it past escape, and at every moment the ram lets drive at the little creature with his horns, gets him under his feet and tramples him, kneels on him and kneads him with his knees, ripping at him all the while with his horns. Then, finally, the little dog is detached and taken away, covered with wounds and bruises, before the ram kills it. It was so with my Margaret, but she was no lamb-killer—only had a high spirit—and she was tied to that man, your father. He rent her away from Richard Malvine, whom she loved, just because it was his pleasure, and he broke her heart. Look here."

The old grandmother drew from her bosom a token, a silver crown-piece of Charles I., on which the King was figured mounted on horseback; but the coin was broken, and to her neck hung but one half.

"Look at this," said Mistress Penwarne. "Here is the half-token that Richard Malvine gave to my daughter, and the other half he kept himself. That was the pledge that they belonged to each other. Yet Anthony Cleverdon of Hall would not have it so. He took her away, and on her marriage day she gave me the broken half-token. She had no right to retain that; but with her broken heart she could not part so readily. As if it were not enough that he had torn her away from the man she loved: your father left not a day to pass without ill-treating her in some way. He was jealous, because he thought her heart still hung to Richard *Malvine; though*, as God in Heaven knows, she never

failed in her duty to him, and strove faithfully to cast out from her heart every thought of the man she had loved, and to whom the Squire of Hall had made her unfaithful. As he could not win her love, he sought to crush her by ill-treatment. Now, O my Lord! how it must rejoice my poor Margaret, and Richard also, in Paradise, to think that their children should come together and be one—be one as they themselves never could be."

She ceased and sobbed. Then, with shaking hands, she put the ribbon to which the broken token depended round Anthony's neck.

"Take this," she said. "I never thought to part with it; but it of right belongs now to thee. Take it as a pledge of thy mother's love, that her broken heart goes with thee to Willsworthy, and finds its rest there; and with it take my blessing."

Anthony bowed his head, and looked at the silver coin, rubbed very much, and placed it on his breast, inside his coat.

"Thank thee, grandmother," he said. "I will cherish it as a remembrance of my mother."

"And tell me," said she, "is it so, that thou art for ever driven away from Hall, that thy father will take thy name, even, and give it to another, and that thou and thy children are for ever to be shut off and cast away from all lot and inheritance in the place where thy forefathers have been?"

"It is even so," answered Anthony. "But, hark!"

A horn was being blown in the street, and there was a tramp of running feet, and voices many in excitement.

"What can be the matter?" exclaimed Magdalen, going to the window. "Mercy on us! What must have taken place?"

Anthony ran out of the house. The street had filled; there were people of all sorts coming out of their houses, asking news, pressing inwards toward the man with the horn. Anthony elbowed his way through the throng.

"What is this about?" he inquired of a man he knew.

"The Duke of Monmouth has landed at Lyme in Dorsetshire. Hey! wave your hat for Protestantism! Who'll draw the sword against Popery and Jesuitism?"

More news was not to be got. The substance of the tidings that had just come in was contained in the few words—the Duke has landed at Lyme; with how many men was not known. What reception he had met with was as yet unknown. No one could say whether the country gentry had rallied to him—whether the militia which had been called out in expectation of his arrival had deserted to his standard.

Anthony remained some time in the street and market-place discussing the news. His spirits rose, his heart beat high; he longed to fly to Lyme, and offer himself to the Duke. His excitement over, the tidings dispelled his concern about his own future and gloomy thoughts about his troubled home. In that home there was at the time much unrest. After he had departed from Willsworthy, Uncle Sol Gibbs had burst into laughter.

"*Ah, Urith*!" said he, "I hope, maid, thy hand is

not hurt. It was not a fair hit. The lad was nettled; he thought himself first in everything, and all at once discovered that an old fool like me, with one hand behind my back, could be at him at every point. Your young cockerells think that because they crow loud they are masters in the cockpit. It disconcerts them to find themselves worsted by such as they have despised. There, I shall bear him no grudge. I forgive him, and he will be ashamed of himself ere ten minutes are past in which his blood has cooled. None of us are masters of ourselves when the juices are in ferment."

He took his niece's hand and looked at the palm; it was darkened across it, by the stroke of the stick.

"So! he has bruised thee, Urith! That would have cracked my old skull had it fallen athwart it, by heaven! Never mind, I kiss thee, wench, for having saved me, and I forgive him for thy sake. Look here, Urith, don't thou go taking it in to thy noddle that all married folks agree like turtle-doves. Didst ever hear me sing the song about Trinity Sunday?

When bites the frost and winds are a blowing,
  I do not heed and I do not care.
When Tony's by me—why let it be snowing,
  'Tis summer-time with me all the year.
The icicles they may hang on the fountain,
  And frozen over the farmyard pool,
The east wind whistle upon the mountain,
  No wintry gusts our love will cool.

That is courtship, Urith—summer in the midst of winter. Now listen to matrimony—what that is:

I shall be wed a Trinity Sunday,
And then—adieu to my holiday!
Come frost, come snow on Trinity Monday,
Why then beginneth my winter day.
If drudge and smudge on Trinity Monday,
If wind and weather—I do not care!
If winter follows Trinity Sunday,
It can't be summer-time all the year.

That's the proper way to regard it. After marriage storms always come; after matrimony nipping frosts and wintry gales. It can't be summer-time all the year. Now just see," continued Uncle Sol, climbing upon the table and seating himself thereon, and then fumbling in his pocket. "Dos't fancy it was ever summer-time with thy father and mother after they were wed? Not a bit, wench—not a bit. They had their quarrels. I don't say that they were exactly of the same sort as be yours, but they were every whit as bad—aye! and worse, and all about this." He opened his hand and showed a broken silver crown piece of Charles I. perforated, and with a ribbon holding it. "I'll tell thee all about it. Afore thy father was like to be married to my sister, he was mighty taken in love with some one else. Well, Urith, I won't conceal it from thee—it was with Margaret Penwarne, that afterwards married old Squire Cleverdon, and became the mother of thy Anthony. Every one said they would make a pair, but he was poor and she had naught, and none can build their nest out of love; so it was put off. But I suppose they had passed their word to each other, *and in token* of good faith had broken a silver crown

and parted it between them. This half," said Uncle Sol, "belonged to thy father. Well, I reckon he ought, when he married thy mother, to have put away from his thoughts the very memory of Margaret Cleverdon. I could not see into his heart—I cannot say what was there. May be he had ceased to think of her after she was wed to Anthony Cleverdon, and he had taken thy mother; may be he had not. All men have their little failings—some one way, some another. Mine is—well, you know it, niece, so let it pass. I hurt none but myself. But thy father never parted with the broken half-token, but would keep it. Many words passed between them over it, and the more angry thy mother was, the more obstinate became thy father. One day they were terrible bad—a regular storm it was, Urith. Then I took down my singlestick, and I went up to Richard, and said I to him, 'Dick! thou art in the wrong. Give me up the half-token, or, by the Lord, I'll lay thy head open for thee!' He knew me, and that I was a man of my word. He considered a moment, and then he put it into my hand—on one condition, that I should never give it to my sister. I swore to that, and we shook hands, and so peace was made for the time. There"——said the old man, descending from the table. "I will give thee the half-token, maid, for my oath does not hold me now. Thine it shall be; and when thou wearest it, or holdest it, think on this—that there is no married life without storms and vexations, and that the only way in which peace is to be gotten is for the one in the wrong to give up to the other."

He put the half-token into Urith's hand.

She received it without a word, and held it in her bruised palm. Her face was lowering, and she mused, looking at the coin.

Yes, he who is in the wrong must abandon his wrongful way—give up what offended the other. What had she to yield? Nothing. She had done her utmost to retain Anthony's love. She had not been false to him by a moment's thought. She had striven against her own nature to fit herself to be his companion. She loved him—she loved him with her whole soul; and yet she hated him—hated him because he had slighted and neglected her at the Cakes, because he was suffering himself to be lured from her by Julian, because he was dissatisfied with his house, resented against her his quarrel with his father. She could hardly discriminate between her love and her hate. One merged into the other, or grew out of the other.

"Come!" said the old man, looking about for his hat. "By the Lord! the boy has gone off with my wet cap. Well, I shall wear his, I cannot tarry here. I will go seek out my friend Cudlip at the Hare and Hounds. I shall not be late, but I want to hear news. There is a wind that the Duke of Monmouth has set sail from the Lowlands. The militia have been called out and the trainbands gathered. Come, Urith, do not look so grave. Brighten up with some of the humours of the maid, who sang of winter on Trinity Monday. It cannot be summer-time all the year—why, neither can it be winter."

Then he swung out of the house trolling:

So let not this pair be despised;
That man is but part of himself,
A man without woman's a beggar,
If he have the whole world full of wealth,
A man without woman's a beggar,
Tho' he of the world were possessed.
But a beggar that has a good woman,
With more than the world is he blessed.

CHAPTER XL.

"THIS FOR JULIAN."

URITH was left alone looking at the broken token. It did not bring to her the cynical consolation that her uncle intended it to convey. It was not even poor comfort, it was no sort of comfort whatever to learn that others had been unhappy in the same way as herself—that there had been discord between her father and mother. The broken token was to her a token of universal breakage—of broken trust, broken ambitions, broken words, broken hearts—but that all the world was in wreck was no relief to Urith, whose only world for which she cared was contained within the bounds of Willsworthy.

She had dreamed with reverence of her father; but Uncle Sol had shown her that this father had been false in heart to her mother. Her own story was that of her mother. Each had married one whose heart had been pre-engaged. After a little while, of sincere

struggle no doubt, the heart swung back to its oldest allegiance. As Urith sat in the hall window, looking out into the court, her eyes rested on the vane over the stables. Now that arrow pointed to the west! Sometimes it veered to other quarters, but the prevailing winds came from the Atlantic, and that vane, though for a few days it may have swerved to north or south, though for a whole month, nay—a whole spring it may have pointed east, as though nailed in that aspect, yet round it swung eventually, and for the rest of the year hardly deviated from west. So was it with the heart of Anthony; so had it been with the heart of her father. Each had had a first love; then there had come a sway towards another point, and eventually a swing round into the direction that had become habitual.

Fox's words at the dance in the house of the Cake's returned to her:—"You cannot root out old love with a word." With Anthony it had been old love. Since childhood he and Julian had known each other, and had looked on each other in the light of lovers. It was a love that had ramified in its roots throughout his heart and mind. It was with this love as with the coltsfoot in the fields. When once the weed was there, it was impossible to eradicate it: the spade that cut it, the pick that tore it up, the sickle that reaped it down, only multiplied it; every severed fibre became a fresh plant—every lopped head seeded on the ground and dispersed its grain. For a while a crop of barley or oats appeared, and the coltsfoot was lost in the upright growth; but the crop was cut and carried, and the *coltsfoot* remained.

Was this a justification for Anthony? Urith did not stay to inquire. She considered herself, her anguish of disappointment, her despair of the future—not him. With all the freshness and vehemence of youth, she had given herself wholly to Anthony. She had loved —cared for—no one before; and when she loved and cared for him it was with a completeness to which nothing lacked. Hers was a love infinite as the ocean, and now she found that his had been but a love in comparison with hers like a puddle that is dried up by the July sun.

She did not consider the matter with regard to Anthony's justification, only as affecting herself—as darkening her entire future. The coltsfoot must go on growing, and spread throughout the field. It could not be extirpated, only concealed for a while. She could never look into Anthony's face—never kiss him again, never endure a word of love from him any more, because of that hateful, hideous, ever-spreading, all-absorbing, only temporarily-coverable weed of first love for Julian. An indescribable horror of the future filled her—an inexpressible agony contracted her heart as with a cramp. She threw up her hands and clutched in the air at nothing; she gasped for breath as one drowning, but could inhale nothing contenting. Everything was gone from her with Anthony, not only everything that made life happy, but endurable. Down the stream belonging to the manor was a little mill, furnished with small grinding-stones, and a wheel that ever turned in the stream that shot over it. No miller lived af the mill. When rye, barley, or wheat had to be ground, some

person from the house went down, set the mill, and poured in the grain. Night and day the wheel went round, and now in her brain was set up some such a mill—there was a whirl within, and a noise in her ears. The little manor-mill could be unset, so that, though the wheel turned, the stones did not grind unless needed; but to this inner mill in her head there was no relaxation. It would grind, grind as long as the stream of life ran—grind her heart, grind up her trust, her hopes, her love, her faith in God, her belief in men—grind up all that was gentle in her nature, till it ground all her nobler nature up into an acrid dust.

The day declined, and she was still looking at the broken token.

The mill was grinding, and was turning out horrible thoughts of jealousy, it ground her love and poured forth hate, it ground up confidence and sent out suspicion. She sprang to her feet. Where was Anthony now? What was he doing all this while? He had been away a long time; with whom had he been tarrying?

The mill was grinding, and now, as she threw in the jealous thoughts, the hate, the suspicions it had just turned out, it ground them over again, and sent forth a wondrous series of fancies in a magic dust that filled her eyes and ears; in her eyes it made her see Anthony in Julian's society, in her ears it made her hear what they said to each other. The dust fell into her blood, and made it boil and rage; it fell on her brain, and there it caught fire and spluttered. She was as one *mad in her agony*—so mad that she caught at the

stanchions of the window and strove to tear them out of the solid granite in which they were set, not that she desired to burst through the window, but that she must tear at and break something.

Why had Anthony marred her life, blistered her soul? She had started from girlhood in simplicity, prepared to be happy in a quiet way, rambling over the moors, in a desultory fashion attending to the farm and garden and the poultry yard. She would have been content, if left alone, never to have seen a man. Her years would have slipped away free from any great sorrow, without any great cares. Willsworthy contented her, where wants were few. She loved and was proud of the place; but Anthony, since he had been there, had found fault with it, had undervalued it, laughed at it; had shown her how bleak it was, how ungenerous was the soil, how out of repair its buildings, how lacking in all advantages.

Anthony had taught her to depreciate what she had highly esteemed. Why need he have done that?

The wheel and the grind-stones were turning, and out ran the bitter answer—because Willsworthy was *hers*, that was why he scorned it, why he saw in it only faults.

She paced the little hall, every now and then clasping her hands over her burning temples, pressing them in with all her force, as though by main strength to arrest the churn of those grind-stones. Then she put them to her ears to shut out the sound of the revolving wheel.

On the mantelshelf was a brass pestle for crushing

spices. She took it down. Into it were stuffed the old gloves of Julian Crymes. It was a characteristic trait of the conduct of the house; nothing was put where it ought to be, or might be expected to be. After these gloves had lain about, at one time in the window, at another on the settle, then upon the table, Urith had finally thrust them out of the way into the pestle, and there they had remained forgotten till now. In the train of her thoughts, Urith was led to the challenge of Julian when she recalled where the gloves were, and these she now took from the place to which she had consigned them.

She unfolded them, and shook the dust from them. Then she stood with one foot on the hearthstone, her burning head resting against the granite upper stone of the fireplace, looking at the gloves. Had Julian made good her threat? Was she really, deliberately, with determinate malice, winding Anthony off Urith's hand on to her own? And if so—to what would this lead? How would she—Urith—be tortured between them. Every hair of her head was a nerve, and each suffering pain.

She lifted her brow from the granite, then dashed it back again, and felt no jar, so acute was the inner-suffering she endured. It were better that Anthony, or she—were dead. Such a condition of affairs as that of which the mill in her head ground out a picture, was worse than death. She could not endure it, she knew—she must go mad with the torment. Oh would! oh—would that Fox's fuse had been left to take its effect in the ear of Anthony's horse, and dash him to pieces *against the* rocks of the Walla!

She could no longer bear the confinement of the house. She gasped and her bosom laboured. She put the gloves between her teeth, and her hands again to her head, but her dark hair fell down about her shoulders. She did not heed it. Her mind was otherwise occupied. In a dim way she was aware of it, and her hands felt for her hair, how to bind it together and fasten it again, but her mind was elsewhere, and her fingers only dishevelled her hair the more.

The air of the room oppressed her; the walls contracted on her; the ceiling came down like lead upon her brain. She plucked the gloves out of her mouth and threw them on the table, then went forth.

The rain had ceased. Evening had long ago set in, the twilight struggling through the vapours overhead, and filling all the prospect with a pale filmy light. It was about the time when "Barnaby bright is all day and no night."

"Where is Anthony? I must see Anthony!" Her words were so hoarse, so strange that they startled her. It is said that when one is possessed, the evil spirit in the man speaks out of him in a strange voice, utterly unlike that which is natural. It might be so now. The old demon in Urith that had gone to sleep was awaking, refreshed with slumber, to reassert his power.

Where was Anthony? What delayed his return? Had he on leaving Willsworthy gone direct to Julian to pour out into her sympathetic ear the story of his domestic troubles? Was he telling her of his wife's shortcomings?—of her temper?—her untidiness?—her waywardness? Were they jeering together in confidence

at poor little moorland Willsworthy? Were they talking over the great mistake Anthony had made in taking Urith in the place of Julian? Were they laughing over that scene when Anthony led out Urith for the dance at the Cake's? She saw their hands meet, and their eyes—their eyes—as at the Cake's.

Then there issued from her breast a scream—a scream of unendurable pain; it came from her involuntarily; it was forced from her by the stress of agony within, but the voice was hoarse and inhuman. She was aware of it, and grasped her hair and thrust it into her mouth to gnaw at, and to stifle the cries of pain which might burst from her again.

She had descended the hill a little way when she thought she discerned a figure approaching, mounting the rough lane. It might be Anthony—it might be Solomon Gibbs. She was unprepared to meet either, so she slipped aside into the little chapel. The portion of wall by the door was fallen, making a gap, but further back grew a large sycamore, out of the floor of the sacred building, near the angle formed by the south and west walls. Behind this she retreated, and thence could see the person who ascended the path, unobserved.

She was startled when Fox Crymes stepped through the gap where had been the door. There was sufficient light for her to distinguish him, but he could not observe her, as the shadows thrown by the dense foliage of the sycamore from above, and the side shadows from the walls, made the corner where Urith stood thoroughly obscure.

She supposed at first that Fox had stopped there for a moment to shake out his wet cloak and readjust it; he did, in fact, rearrange the position of the mantle, but it was not so as more effectually to protect himself from rain but in order to leave his right arm free. Moreover, after that he had fitted his cloak to suit his pleasure, he did not resume his ascent of the lane to Willsworthy.

For a while Urith's thoughts were turned into a new channel. She wondered, in the first place, why Fox should come to Willsworthy at that hour; and next why Fox, if Willsworthy should be his destination, halted where he was, without attempting to proceed.

His conduct also perplexed her. He seated himself on a stone and whistled low to himself through a broken tooth in front that he had—a whistle that was more of a hiss of defiance than a merry pipe. Then he took out his hunting-knife, and tried the point on his fingers. This did not perfectly satisfy him, and he whetted it on a piece of freestone moulding still in position, that formed a jamb of the old door, of which the arch and the other jamb were fallen.

This occupied Fox for some time, but not continuously, for every now and then he stood up, stole to the lane, and cautiously peered down it, never exposing himself so as to be observed by any person ascending the rough way.

The air was still, hardly any wind stirred, but what little there was came in sudden puffs that shook the foliage of the sycamore burdened with wet, and sent down a shower upon the floor. Urith could not feel

the wind, and when it came it was as though a shudder went through the tree, and it tossed off the burden of water oppressing it, much as would a long-haired spaniel on emerging from a bath.

Bats were abroad. One swept up and down the old chapel, noiseless, till it came close to the ear, when the whirr of the wings was as that of the sails of a mill.

An uneasy peewit was awake and awing, flitting and uttering its plaintive, desolate cry. It was not visible in the silvery night-sky, and was still for a minute; then screamed over the ruins; then wheeled away, and called, as an echo from a distance, an answer to its own cry.

Fox stood forward again in the road, and strained his eyes down the lane; then stole a little way along it to where he could, or thought he could, see a longer stretch of it; then came back at a run, and stood snorting in the ruins once more. Again, soft and still, came on a comminuted rain—the very dust of rain—so fine and so light that it took no direction, but floated on the air, and hardly fell. Fox turned to the sycamore tree. No shelter could be had beneath its water-burdened leaves, that gathered the moisture and shot it down on the ground. But he did not look at it as desiring its shelter. He stepped towards it, then drew back; exclaimed, "Ah! Anthony. Here's one for Urith," and struck his knife into the bole. The blade glanced through the bark, sheering off a long strip, that rolled over and fell on the ground attached to the tree at the bottom. "You took her and Willsworthy from me," said Fox, drawing back. Then he aimed another blow *at the tree,* cursing, "And here is for my eye!"

Urith started back: each blow seemed to be aimed at and to hit her, who was behind the tree. She felt each stroke as a sharp spasm in her heart.

Fox dragged at his knife, worked it up, down, till he had loosened it; then withdrew it. Then he laid his left hand, muffled in his cloak, against the sycamore trunk, and raised his knife again. "That is not enough," he whispered, and it was to Urith as though he breathed it into her ear. He struck savagely into the side of the tree, as though into a man, under the ribs, and said, "And this for Julian."

Before he could release his blade, Urith had stepped forth and had laid her hand on him.

"Answer me," she said: "What do you mean by those words, 'And this for Julian?'"

CHAPTER XLI.

"THAT FOR URITH."

Fox cowered, and retreated step by step before Urith, who stepped forward at every step he retreated. He seemed to contract to a third of his size before her eyes, over which a lambent, phosphorescent fire played. They were fixed on his face: he looked up but once, and then, scorched and withered, let his eyes fall, and did not again venture to meet hers.

Her hands were on his shoulders. It might have been thought that she was driving him backwards, but it was not so. He recoiled instinctively; but for her

hands he might have staggered and fallen among the scattered stones of the old chapel that strewed the floor.

"Answer me!" said Urith, again. "What did you mean, when you said—'This for Julian?'"

"What did I mean?" he repeated, irresolutely.

"Answer me—what did you mean? I can understand that in thought Anthony stood before you when you struck—once because I had cast you over, and had taken him—once because he touched and hurt your eye—but why the third time for Julian?"

He lifted one shoulder after the other, squirming uneasily under her hands, and did not reply, save with a scoffing snort through his nostrils.

"I know that you are waiting here for Anthony—and like yourself, waiting to deal a treacherous blow. It is not such as you who meet a foe face to face, after an open challenge, in a fair field."

"An open challenge, in a fair field!" echoed Fox, recovering some of his audacity, after the first shock of alarm at discovery had passed away. "Would that be a fair field in which all the skill, all the strength is on one side? An open challenge! Did he challenge me when he struck me with the gloves in the face and hurt my eye? No—he never warned me, and why should I forewarn him?"

"Come!" said Urith, "go on before—up to Willsworthy; I will not run the chance of being seen here talking with you, as if in secret. Go on—I follow."

She waved him imperiously forth, and he obeyed as a whipped cur, sneaked through the broken door *way forth into* the lane. He looked down the road t

see if Anthony were ascending, but saw no one. Then he turned his head to observe Urith, hastily sheathed his knife, and trudged forward in the direction required.

Urith said nothing till the hall was entered, when she pointed to a seat, and went with a candlestick into the kitchen to obtain a light. She returned directly, having shut the doors between, so that no servant could overhear what was said. The candlestick she placed on the table, and then planted herself opposite Fox Crymes. He was sitting with his back to the table, so that the light was off his face, and such as there was from a single candle fell on Urith; but he did not look up. His eyes were on the skirt of her dress and on her feet, and by them he could see that she was quivering with emotion. He seemed to see her through the flicker of hot air that rises from a kiln. He wiped his eyes, thinking that his sight was disturbed, but by a second look ascertained that the tremulous motion was in Urith. It was like the quiver of a butterfly's wings when fluttering at the window trying to escape.

"I am ready," said Urith. "What did you mean when you said, 'This for Julian?'"

He half lifted his cunning eyes, but let them fall again. He had recovered his assurance and decided on his course.

"I suppose," sneered he, "that you will allow that I have a right to chastise the man who insults our good name, to bring my sister into the mouths of folk?"

"Has he done so?"

"You ask that?" he laughed mockingly. "How remote this spot must be to be where the breath of scandal does not blow. You ask that? Why, fore

Heaven, I supposed that jealousy quickened and sharpened ears, but yours must be singularly blunt, or mayhap, deadened by indifference."

"Tell me plainly what you have to say."

"Do you not know that your Anthony was engaged, or all but engaged—had been for some fifteen years—to my sister? Then he saw you under remarkable circumstances, saw and attended you along the Lyke Way that night of the fire on the moor. Then a spark of the wild fire fell into his blood, and he forgot his old, established first love, and in a mad humour took you. Take a scale," pursued Fox, "put in one shell my sister with her wealth, her civilized beauty, her heritage, the grand old house of Kilworthy, and her representation of a grand old line. Put in also"—he suited the action to his word, in imaginary scales in the air before him, and saw the shrink of Urith's feet at each item he named—"put in also his father's favour, Hall, where he was born and bred, the inheritance of his family for many generations, with its associations, his sister's company, the respect of his neighbours: all that and more that I have not named into the one scale, and into the other.—Come, come!"—he crooked his finger, and made a sign with his knuckle, and his face was distorted, full of mockery and malice—"come, skip in and sit yourself down with a couple of paniers of peat earth, that grows only rushes. What say you? Do you outweigh Julian and all the rest? And your peat earth, sour and barren, does that sink your sca' heavier than all the bags of gold and rich warm s *of Kilworthy* and Hall combined?"

He glanced upward hurriedly, to see what effect his words had. All this that he said Urith had said to herself; but though the same thoughts uttered to herself cut her like razors, they were as razors dipped in poison, when coming articulate from the lips of Fox.

"Do you not suppose," continued he, "that after the first fancy was over, Anthony wearied of you, and went back in heart out from this wilderness, back to Goshen and to the Land of Promise rolled into one, with the fleshpots, and without hard labour? Of course he did. He were a fool if he did not, or your hold over him must be magical indeed, and the value of Willsworthy altogether extraordinary."

Again he furtively looked at her. Her eyes were off him, he felt it, before he saw it. She was looking down at the floor, and her teeth were fastened into her clenched hands. She was biting them to keep under the hysterical paroxysm that was coming over her. He took a malevolent delight in lashing her to a frenzy with his cruel words, and so avenging himself on her for his rejection, avenging himself on her in the most terrible way possible, by making her relations with her husband henceforth intolerable.

She could no longer speak. He saw it, and he waited for no words. He went on: "You married him; you married him, notwithstanding that he had offered the grossest insult to the memory of your father. You married him indecently early after your mother's death, and that was an outrage on her memory. Whether you have the blessing of father and mother on your union is more than doubtful. I should rather say that

out of heaven they fling their united curses on you for what you have done."

A hoarse sound issued from her throat. It was not a cry, nor a groan, but like the gasp of a dying person.

"And now the curse is working. Of course Anthony is hungering after what he has thrown away. But he cannot get Kilworthy. You stand in the way. He can get Hall only by casting you over. That he will do."

Suddenly Urith became rigid as stone. She could not speak, she dropped her hands, and looked with large fixed eyes at Fox. He saw, by the cessation of the quiver of her skirt, that she had become stiff as if dead.

"That," repeated Fox, "he is prepared to do. His father made him the offer. If he would leave you, then, said the old Squire, all should be as before. Anthony should go back to Hall, live with his father, be treated as heir, and command his pocket—only you were to be discarded wholly, and he was not to see you again."

Fox paused, and began his hissing whistle through his broken tooth. He waited to let the full force of his words fall on her to crush her, before he went on still further to maltreat her with words more terrible than blows of bludgeons or stabs of poisoned knife.

Now he twisted his belt round, and laid the scabbarded hunting knife before him on his lap, played with it, and then slowly drew forth the blade.

"But now—" he said, leisurely, "now I reckon you can see why I took out my knife, and why I would

strike him down before he leaves you and returns to Hall. Already has there been talk concerning him and my sister. He gave rise to it at the dance at the Cake's. But you know better than I what happened there, as I went away with my father, who arrived from London. When young blood boils, it is forgotten that the sound of the bubbling is audible. When hearts flame, it is not remembered that they give out light and smoke. I suppose that Anthony and my sister forgot that they were in the midst of observant eyes when they met again, as of old so often; just as they forgot that you existed and were a bar between them. I tell you I do not know what took place then, as I was not there, but you had eyes and could see, and may remember."

He put the knife upright with the haft on his knee, and set his finger at the end of the blade, balancing it in that position. She saw it, her eyes were attracted by the blade; the light of the candle flashed on the polished steel; then Fox turned the blade and the light went out, then again it flashed, as the surface again came round over against the candle.

"When Anthony is back at Hall, I know well what will take place. Even now he comes over often to Kilworthy, too often, forgetful of you, forgetful of all save his old regard, his love for Julian, that draws him there; he cannot keep away even now. When he is at Hall nothing will retain him, and he will bring my sister's fair name into the dirt. Have I not a cause to take out this knife? Must I not stand as her guardian? My father is old, he has no thoughts for aught save

the Protestant cause and Liberty, and Parliamentary rights. He lets all go its own way, and, unless I were present to defend my sister, he would wake, rub his eyes, and find—find that all the world was talking about the affairs of his house, and his grey hairs would be brought in shame to the grave. Julian has no mother, and has only me. She and I have bickered and fought, but I value the honour of my family, and for that I can, when need be, strike a blow. You know now what it is I fear; you know what it is I meant when I took out my knife and waited in the chapel for the man who would bring my sister to dishonour. I could tell you more—I could tell you that which would make you kiss the blade that tapped his blood, that entered his false heart and let out the black falsity that is there, but——" He looked hesitatingly at her, then slowly rose, and, watching her, went backwards to the door.

She stood motionless, white, as though frozen, and as still; her hands were uplifted. She had been about to raise them to her mouth again, but the frost had seized them as they were being lifted, and they were held rigid, in suspense. Her eyes were wide and fixed, her mouth half-open, and her lower jaw quivered as with intense cold, the only part of her in which any motion remained. So stiff, so congealed did she seem, that it occurred to Fox, as he looked at her, that were he to touch and stir her wild flowing hair, it would break and fall like icicles on the floor. He stepped back to the door, then held up his finger, with a smile *upon his lips*—

"I am coming back again. I am not going to run away."

A convulsive movement in her arms. Her hands went up with a jerk to her mouth.

"No," said Fox; "do not bite your pretty hands. There"—he turned to the table and picked up the old pair of gloves that lay there—"if you must tear something, tear these. They will do you good."

He put the gloves to her hands, and they mechanically closed on them. Her eyes were as stones. All light had deserted them, as fire had deserted her blood, had died out of her heart.

Fox went out, and remained absent about five minutes. Suddenly the door was dashed open, and he came in excitedly. "He is coming—he is hard at hand. I have more to say. Do you mistrust me? Do you think I am telling lies? I will say it to his face; and then——" He drew his knife and made a stroke with it in the air, then sheathed it again. "Go," said he, "go in yonder." He pointed to the well-chamber that opened out of the hall. "Remain there. The rest I will tell Anthony to his face."

He caught her by the wrist and led her to the door, and almost forced her into the little chamber.

Then he went across the hall to the door that led to the kitchen, opened it, and looked into a small passage; crossed that to another door communicating with the kitchen, and turned the key in it. He returned to the hall, and was shutting the door behind him when Anthony entered from outside.

Anthony raised his brows with surprise at the sight of Fox there, and flushed with anger. This was the man who was going to displace him at Hall, occupy his inheritance, and take his very name. And Fox—this treacherous friend—had the daring to come to his house and meet him.

"What brings you here?" asked Anthony, roughly.

"An excellent reason, which you might divine."

Fox had completely recovered his assurance. He came across the room towards the seat he had occupied before, and, with a "By your leave," resumed it. He thus sat with his face in shadow, and his back to the door of the well-chamber.

"And, pray, what are you doing in my house? Hast' come to see me or Master Gibbs?"

"You—you alone."

Anthony threw himself into the settle; his brow was knit; he was angry at the intrusion, and yet not altogether unwilling to see Fox—for he desired to have a word with him relative to his proposed marriage with Bessie, and assumption of his name.

"And I," said he; "I desire an explanation with you, Fox."

"Come, now!" exclaimed young Crymes. "I have a desire to speak with you, and you with me. Which is to come first? Shall we toss? But, nay! I will begin; and then, when I have done, we shall see what desire remains in thee to talk to me and pluck thy crow."

"I want then to know what has brought you here? Where is my wife? Where is Urith? Have you seen

her?" Anthony turned his head, and looked about the room.

"What!" said Fox, with a jeer in his tone, "dost think because thou runnest to Kilworthy to make love to my sister Julian, that I came here to sweetheart thy wife?"

"Silence!" said Anthony, with a burst of rage, and sprang from his seat.

"I will not keep silence," retorted Fox, turning grey with alarm at the hasty motion, and with concentrated rage. "Nay, Anthony, I will not be silent! Answer me; hast thou not been this very day with Julian?"

"And what if I did see her? I went to Kilworthy to find you."

"You go there oftentimes to find me, but, somehow, always when I am out, and Julian is at home. When you learn I am not there, do you return here? do you go elsewhere? Nay, you console yourself for my absence by her society—bringing her into ill-repute in the county."

"You lie!" shouted Anthony.

"I do not lie," retorted Fox. "Did you not remain with her to-day. Where else have you been? Who drew your initials on the glass beside hers, and bound them together with a true lover's knot?"

Anthony's head fell. He had planted himself on the hearthstone, with his back to the fireplace—now without burning logs or peat in it. The flush that had been driven by anger to his face deepened with shame to a dark crimson.

Fox observed him out of his small, keen eyes.

"Tell me this," he pursued. "Was it not indiscreet that thy father should come in and find thee and Julian locked in each other's arms, exchanging lovers' kisses?"

Anthony looked suddenly up, and in a moment all the blood left his face and rushed to his heart. He saw behind the chair in which sat Fox, the form of his wife. Urith—grey as a corpse, but with fire spirting from her eyes, and her nostrils and lips quivering. Her hand was lifted, clenched, on something, he could not see what.

"Tell me," repeated Fox, slowly rising, and putting his hand to his belt. "Tell me—can you deny that? —can you say that it is a lie? Your own father told me what he had seen. Did he lie?"

Anthony did not hear him, did not see him; his eyes were fixed in sorrow, shame, despair, on Urith. Oh, that she should hear this, and that he should be unable to answer!

"Strike—kill him!" her voice was hoarse—like that of a man; and she dashed the gloves, torn to shreds by her teeth, against his breast.

Instantly, Fox's arm was raised, the knife flashed in the candle-light, and fell on him, struck him where he had been touched by the gloves.

"That," the words attended the blows, "That for Urith."

Anthony dropped on the hearthstone.

Then, as Fox raised his arm once more—without a cry, without a word, Urith sprang before him, thrust him back with all her force, so that he reeled to the table, and only saved himself from a fall by catching at it, and she sank consciousless on the hearthstone beside Anthony.

CHAPTER XLII.

ON THE BRIDGE.

Fox soon recovered himself, and seeing Anthony moving and rising on one hand, he came up to him again, and thrust him back, and once more stooping over him, raised the knife.

"One for Urith," he said, "one for myself, and then one for Julian."

Before he could strike he was caught by the neck and dragged away.

Luke Cleverdon was in the hall; he had entered unobserved. Fox stood leaning against the table, hiding his weapon behind him, looking at Luke with angry yet alarmed eyes.

"Go," said Luke, waving his left hand. "I have not the strength to detain you, nor are there sufficient here to assist me were I to summon aid. Go!"

Fox, still watching him, sidled to the door, holding his knife behind him, but with a sharp, quick look at Anthony, who was disengaging himself from the burden of Urith, lying unconscious across him, and raising himself from where he had fallen. Blood flowed from his bosom and stained his vest.

"It was she. She bade me!" said Fox, pointing towards Urith. Then he passed through the door into the porch, and forth into the night.

Luke bent over Urith, who remained unconscious,

and raised her to enable Anthony to mount to his feet, then he gently laid her down again, and said.

"Before any one comes in, Anthony, let me attend to you, and let us hide, if it may be, what has happened from other eyes."

He tore open Anthony's vest and shirt, and disclosed his breast. The knife had struck and dinted the broken token, then had glanced off and dealt a flesh wound. So forcible had been the blow that the impress of the broken crown, its part of a circle and the ragged edge were stamped on Anthony's skin. The wound he had received was not dangerous. The token had saved his life. Had it not turned the point of Fox's knife, he would have been a dead man, the blade would have entered his heart.

Luke went to the well-chamber, brought thence a towel, tore it down the middle, passed it about the body of Anthony, and bound the linen so fast round him as to draw together the lips of the wound, and stay the flow of blood.

He said not one word whilst thus engaged. Nor did Anthony, whose eyes reverted to Urith, lying with face as marble, and motionless upon the floor.

When Luke had finished his work, he said gravely, "Now I will call in aid. Urith must be conveyed upstairs, you ride for a surgeon, and do not be seen. Go to my house, and tarry till I arrive. Take one of your best horses, and go."

Anthony obeyed in silence.

When Mistress Penwarne had returned from the visit to Magdalen Cleverdon, she had communicated the in-

telligence of Fox's suit, and of the old Squire's resolution, to Luke, and he at once started for Willsworthy, that he might see Anthony. Of the offer made by the father to Anthony he, of course, knew nothing; but the proposal to marry Bessie to Fox, and for the latter to assume the name of Cleverdon, filled him with concern. Bessie would need a firmer supporter than her Aunt Magdalen to enable her to resist the pressure brought upon her. Moreover, Luke was alarmed at the thought of the result to Anthony. He would be driven to desperation, become violent, and might provoke a broil with Fox, in which weapons would be drawn.

He arrived at Willsworthy in time to save the life of Anthony, and he had no doubt that the quarrel had arisen over the suit for Bessie, as well as the meditated assumption of the Cleverdon name. Anthony was hot-headed, and would never endure that Fox should step into his rights. But Luke could not understand what had induced Fox to run his head into danger. That he was audacious he knew, but this was a piece of audacity of which he did not suppose him to be capable.

Anthony saddled and bridled the best horse in the stable, and rode to Tavistock, where he placed himself in the hands of a surgeon. He did not explain how he had come by the wound, but he requested the man to keep silence concerning it. Quarrels over their cups were not infrequent among the young men, and these led to blows and sword thrusts, as a matter of course.

The surgeon confirmed the opinion expressed by Luke. The wound was not serious, it would soon heal;

and he sewed it up. As he did so, he talked. There was a stir in the place. Squire Crymes of Kilworthy had been sending round messages to the villages, calling on the young men to join him. He made no secret of his intentions to march to the standard of the Duke of Monmouth.

"It is a curious fact," said Surgeon Pierce, "but his Lordship the Earl of Bedford had been sending down a large quantity of arms to his house that had been built out of the abbey ruins. His agent had told folks that the Earl was going to fit up a hall there with pikes, and guns, and casques, and breastplates, for all the world like the ancient halls in the days before Queen Elizabeth. Things do happen strangely," continued the surgeon. "All at once, not an hour ago, it was whispered among the young men who were about in the market-place talking of the news, and asking each other whether they'd fight for the Pope or for the Duke, that there were all these weapons in his Lordship's hall; and that no one was on the spot to guard them. Well, they went to the place, got in, and no resistance offered, and armed themselves with whatever they could find, and are off the Lord knows where."

When Anthony left the surgeon's house, he considered what he should do, after having seen his cousin. To Luke's lodgings in the rectory at Peter Tavy he at once rode. To his cousin he must speak. To Willsworthy he could not return. The breach between him and Urith was irreparable. She knew that he had tampered with temptation, and believed him to be more *faithless to her* than he really had been. He would

not, indeed he could not, explain the circumstances to her, for no explanation could make the facts assume a better colour. It was true that he had turned for a while in heart from Urith. Even now, he felt he did not love her. But no more did he love Julian. With the latter he was angry. When he thought of her, his blood began to simmer with rage. If he could have caught her now in his arms, he would have strangled her. She had played with him, lured him on, till she had utterly destroyed his happiness.

What had he done? He had kissed Julian. That was nothing; it was no mortal crime. Why should he not kiss an old friend and comrade whom he had known from childhood? What right had Urith to take offence at that? Had he written their initials on the glass, and united them by a true lover's knot? He had; but he had also effaced them, and linked his own initial with that of Urith. He loved Urith no longer. His married life had been wretched. He had committed an act of folly in marrying her. Well, was he to be cut off from all his old acquaintances because he was the husband of Urith? Was he to treat them with distance and coldness? And then, how Julian had looked at him! how she had bent over him, and she—yes, she—had kissed him! Was he to sit still as a stone to receive the salutation of a pretty girl? Who would? Not a Puritan, not a saint. It was impossible—impossible to young flesh and blood. A girl's kiss must be returned with usury—tenfold. He was in toils—entangled hand and foot—and he sought in vain to break through them. But he could not remain thus bound—

bound by obligation to Urith, whom he did not love —bound by old association to Julian, whom he once had loved, and who loved him still—loved him stormily, fervently. What could he do? He must not go near Julian—he dare not. He could not go back to Urith —to Urith who had given to Fox the mandate to kill him! He had heard her words. It was a planned matter. She had brought Fox to Willsworthy, and had concerted with him how he, Anthony, was to be killed. And yet Anthony knew that she loved him. Her love had been irksome to him—so jealous, so exacting, so greedy had it been. If she had desired and schemed his death, it was not that she hated him, but because she loved him too much—she could not endure that he should be estranged from her and drawn towards another.

But one course was open to him. He must tear —cut his way through the entangled threads. He must free himself at one stroke from Urith and from Julian. He would join Monmouth.

He rode, thus musing, towards Peter Tavy, and halted on the old bridge that spanned in two arches the foaming river. The rain that had fallen earlier had now wholly ceased, but the sky remained covered with a dense grey blanket of felt-like cloud. A fresher air blew; it came from the north, down the river with the water, and fanned Anthony's heated brow.

His wound began now to give him pain; he felt it as a line of red-hot iron near his heart. It was due to pure accident that he was not dead. If matters had *fallen out as Urith* desired, he would now be lying life-

less on the hearthstone where he had dropped, staggered and upset by the force of Fox's blow, when unprepared to receive it.

Now he recalled that half-challenge offered on the moor when first he met Urith, and had wondered over her bitten hands. He had half-threatened to exasperate her to one of her moods of madness, to see what she would do to him when in such a mood. He had forgotten all about that bit of banter till this moment. Unintentionally he had exasperated her, till she had lost all control over herself, and, unable to hurt him herself, had armed Fox to deal him the blow which was to avenge her wrongs.

He could not go back to the house where was the girl who had sought his life. No—there was nothing else for him to do but to throw in his lot with Monmouth, and, at the moment, he cared little whether it would be a winning or a losing cause.

"Anthony?"

"Yes. Is that you, Luke?"

A dark figure stepped on to the bridge, and came to the side of the horse.

"I have been home," said the curate. "Urith is ill: she scarce wakes out of one faint to fall into another. I have sent your grandmother to Willsworthy to be with her."

"It is well," answered Anthony. "And, now that we have met here, I wish a word with you, Luke. I am not going back to Willsworthy."

"Not—to Urith?"

"No, I cannot. I am going to ride at once to join

the Duke of Monmouth. You have the Protestant cause at heart, Luke, and wish it well; so have I. But that is not all—I must away now. I do not desire to meet Fox for awhile."

"No," said Luke, after a moment of consideration; "no, I can understand that. But Bessie must not be left without some one to help her."

"There is yourself. What can I do? Besides, Bess is strong in herself. She will never go against what she believes to be right. She will never step into my shoes, nor will she help Fox to draw them on."

"You cannot ride now, with your wound."

"Bah! That is naught. You said as much yourself."

"Tony, there is something yet I do not understand," said Luke, falteringly. "Did you first strike Fox?"

"No—no. I had my hands behind me. I stood at the hearth."

"But the quarrel was yours with him, rather than his with you. If you did not strike him, why did he aim at you?"

"Luke, there were matters passed of which you need know naught—at least, no more than this. My father had offered to receive me back into his good-will once more to let the past be blotted out, no longer to insist on Bess being wed to Fox, and to return to live at Hall."

"Indeed!" Luke exclaimed, joyously. "Now I can see why Fox came to you, and why he struck you."

"*It was on one* condition."

"And that was——"

"That I should leave Urith, and never speak to her again."

"Anthony!" Luke's tone was full of terror and pain. "Oh, Anthony! Surely you never—never for one moment—not by half a word—gave consent, or semblance of consent, to this! It would—it would kill her! Oh, Anthony!"

Luke put up both his hands on the pommel of the saddle, and clasped them. What light there was fell on his up-turned, ash-grey face.

"Anthony, answer me. Has she been informed of that? She never thought you could be so cruel—so false; and she has loved you. My God! her whole heart has been given to you—to you, and to no one else; and you have not valued it as you should have done. Because you have had to lose this and that, you have resented it on her. She has had to bear your ill-humour—she has suffered, and has been saddened. And now—no! I cannot think it. You have not let her know that this offer was made."

The sweat drops poured and rolled off Luke's brow. He looked up, and waited on Anthony for a reply.

"She did know it," answered the latter, "but that was Fox's doing. He told her; and told her what was false, that I intended to accept the offer, and leave her. No, Luke, I have done many things that are wrong, I have been inconsiderate, but I could not do this. And now I bid you go to-morrow to my father, see him, and tell him my answer. That is expressed in one word—Never."

Luke seized his hand, and wrung it. "That is my own dear cousin Anthony!" he said, and then added, "but why away at once, and Urith so ill?"

"I must away at once. I cannot return to her." Anthony hesitated for somewhile; at last he said, in a low tone, "I will tell you why—she thinks me false to her, and in a measure I have been so. She thinks I no longer love her—and it is true. My love is dead. Luke—I cannot return."

"Oh, Urith—poor Urith!" groaned the curate, and let his hands fall.

"Now I go. Whatever haps, naught can be worse than the state of matters at present. If you can plead in any way for me, when I am away, do so. I would have her think better of me than she does—but I love her no more."

Then he rode away.

Luke remained on the bridge, looking over into the rushing water—the river was full.

"Poor Urith! Poor Urith!—and it was I—it was I who united them." Then he turned in the direction of Hall. "I will go there, and bear Anthony's message to his father at once."

CHAPTER XLIII.

AN EXPIRING CANDLE.

WHEN Squire Cleverdon arrived at Hall, he found *there* awaiting him a man booted, spurred, whip i

hand, bespattered with mire. The old man asked him his business without much courtesy, and the man replied that he had ridden all day from Exeter with a special letter for Master Cleverdon, which he was ordered to deliver into his hands, and into his alone.

Old Cleverdon impatiently tore away the string and broke the seal that guarded the letter, opened it, and began to read. Then, before he had read many lines, he turned ghastly white, reeled, and sank against the wall, and his hands trembled in which he held the page.

He recovered himself almost immediately, sufficiently to give orders for the housing and entertainment of the messenger; and then he retired to his private room, or office, into which he locked himself. He unclosed a cabinet that contained his papers, and, having kindled a light, brought forth several bundles of deeds and books of accounts, and spread them on the table before him. Some of the documents were old and yellow, and were written in that set court-hand that had been devised to make what was written in it unintelligible save to the professionals. Squire Cleverdon took pen and a clean sheet of paper and began calculations upon it. These did not afford him much satisfaction. He rose, took his candle, opened and relocked the door, and ascended the stairs to his bedroom, where he searched in a secret receptacle in the fireplace for his iron box, in which were all his savings. Thence he brought the gold he had, and, having placed the candle on the floor, began to arrange the gold coins in tens, in rows, where the light of the candle fell. After the gold came the silver, and after the silver

some bundles of acknowledgments of moneys due that had never been paid, but which were recoverable.

Having ascertained exactly what he had in cash, and what he might be able at a short notice to collect, the old man replaced all in the iron case, and reclosed the receptacle.

In the mean while, during the evening, after darkness had set in, to Bessie's great annoyance, Fox appeared. Directly he left Willsworthy, he thought it advisable to visit Hall before going home, and forestall with old Cleverdon the tidings of what had occurred. He did not doubt that the story of his attack on Anthony would be bruited about—that Anthony, or Luke, or both, would tell of it, to his disadvantage, and he determined to relate it in his own way at once, before it came round to the ears of the Squire, wearing another complexion from that which he wished it to assume.

"You desire to see my father," said Bessie. "He is engaged, he is in his room; he would not be disturbed."

"I must see him, if but for a minute."

Bessie went to the door and knocked, but received no answer. She came back to the parlour. "My father is busy; he has locked himself into his room. You had better depart."

"I can wait," said Fox.

"Then you must pardon my absence. There has come a messenger this evening for my father, with a letter that has to be considered. I must attend to what is fitting for the comfort of the traveller."

When left to himself, Fox became restless. He

stood up, and himself tried the door of old Anthony's apartment. It was locked. He struck at the door with his knuckles, but received no answer. Then he looked through the keyhole; it was dark within. The old man was not there, but at that moment he heard him cough up stairs. He was therefore in his bedroom, and Fox would catch him as he descended. He returned to the parlour.

Presently Bessie entered with Luke; she had gone to the door, had stood in the porch communing with herself, unwilling to be in the room with her tormentor, when Luke appeared, and asked to see her father. "Verily," said she, with a faint smile, "he is in mighty request this night; you are the third who has come for him—first a stranger, then Fox——"

"Fox here?"

"Yes, he is within."

"I am glad. A word with him before I see your father, and do you keep away, Bessie, for awhile till called."

Fox started to his feet when Luke came in, but said nothing till Bessie left the room; then hurriedly,—

"You raven—what news? But mark you. I did it in self-defence. Every man must defend his own life. When he knew that I was to take his place in Hall, he rushed on me, and I did but protect myself."

"Anthony's wound is trifling," said Luke coldly.

"So! and you have come to prejudice me in the ear of his father."

"I am come with a message from Anthony to his father."

"Indeed—to come and see his scratch, and f blood from it; and then to clasp each other and weep, and make friends?"

"The message is not to you, but to his father."

"And—he is not hurt?"

"Not seriously hurt."

"I never designed to hurt him. I did but defend my own self. I treated him as an angry boy with a knife."

"No more of this," said Luke. "Let the matter not be mentioned. I will say naught concerning it, neither do you. So is best. As for Anthony, he is away."

"Away? Whither gone?"

"Gone to-night to join Monmouth. Your father is gathering men for the Protestant cause, Anthony will be with him and them."

Fox laughed. His insolence had come back, as his fears abated.

"Faith! he has run away, because I pricked him with a pin. At the first prick he fainted."

Luke went to the door, and called in Bessie. H could not endure the association with Fox.

"Bess!" he said, "can I see your father?—I have message for him from Tony."

"He is upstairs—in his bedroom," said Bessie, will tell him you are here when he descends."

"Come hither," exclaimed Fox, who had recov all his audacity, and with it boisterous spirits. "C hither, Bess, my dear, and let Cousin Curate Luke *how we stand to* each other."

"And, pray," said Bessie, colouring, "how do we stand to each other?"

"My word! you are hot. We shall be asking him ere long to join our hands—so he must be prepared in time—he will have a pleasure in calculating the amount of his fee."

"Cousin Luke," said Bessie, "I am not sorry that he has mentioned this, for so I can answer him in your presence, and give him such an answer before you as he has had from me in private, but would not take. Never, neither by persuasion, nor by force, shall I be got to give my consent."

In spite of his self control, Fox turned livid with rage.

"Is that final?" he asked.

"It is final."

"We shall see," sneered he. "Say what you will, I do not withdraw."

"For shame of you!" exclaimed Luke stepping between Bessie and Fox. "If you have any good-feeling in you, do not pester her with a suit that is odious to her, and, after what has happened to-night, should, to yourself, be impossible."

"Oh!" jeered Fox; "you yourself proposed silence, and are bursting to let the matter escape."

"Desist," said Luke. "Desist from a pursuit that is cruel to her, and which you cannot prosecute with honour to yourself."

"I will not desist!" retorted Fox. "Tell me this. Who first sought to bring it about? Was it I? No. Magdalen Cleverdon was she who prepared it, then

came the Squire himself. It's the Cleverdons who have hunted me—who try to catch me; not I who have been the hunter. You call me Fox, and you have been hue and tally-ho! after me."

"There is my father!" gasped Bessie, and ran from the room. She found the old man in the passage with his candle, unlocking his sitting-room door.

"Oh, father!" she said, breathlessly, for the scene that had occurred had taken away her breath, "here is Luke come—he must see you."

"What! at night? I cannot. I am busy."

"But, father, he has a message."

"A message? What, another? I will not see him."

"For a moment, uncle. It is a word from Anthony," said Luke, entering the passage. "One word, shall I say it here, or within?"

"I care not—if it is one word, say it here; but only one word."

He was fumbling with the key in the lock. His hand that held the candle shook, and the wax fell on his fingers and on the cuff of his coat. He had the key inserted in the door, and could not turn it in the wards.

"Very well," said Luke. "You shall have it in one word—Never."

The old man let the key fall—he straightened himself. His voice shook with anger. "It is well. It is as I could have wished it. I take him at his word. Never. Never—let me say it again. Never, and once again, Never; and each never shuts a door on him for *all time. Never* shall he have my forgiveness. Never

shall he inherit an acre or a pound of mine. Never will I speak to him another word. Nay, were he dying, I would not go to see him; could I by a word save his life, I would not do it. Go, tell him that. Now go—and Elizabeth, hold the candle. I will open the door; go in before me to my room, I'll lock the door on us both. Now all is plain. The wind has cleared away the mists, and we must settle all between us this night, with the way open before us."

He managed to unfasten the door, and he made his daughter pass in, carrying the light. Then he turned the key in the lock. The little table was strewn with deeds and papers and books. Bessie cast a glance at it, and saw no spot on which she could set the candle. She therefore held it in her hand, standing before her father, who threw himself into his chair. She was pale, composed, and resolved. He could have nothing further to urge than what had been urged already, and she had her answer to that. The candle was short, it had swaled down into the tray, and could not burn for more than ten minutes.

"Elizabeth," said her father, "I shall not repeat what has been said already. I have told you what my wishes, what my commands are. You can see in Anthony what follows on the rebellion of a child against the father. Let me see in you that obedience which leads to happiness as surely as his disobedience has brought him to misery. But I have said all this before, and I will not now repeat it. There are farther considerations which make me desire that you should take Anthony Crymes without delay." He drew a long

breath, and vainly endeavoured to conceal his agitation. "I bought this place—Hall—where my forefathers have been as tenants for many generations, I bought it, but I had not sufficient money at command, so I mortgaged the estate and borrowed the money to pay for it. Then I thought soon and easily to have paid off the debt. The mortgagee did not press; but having Hall as mine own was, I found, another thing to having Hall as a tenant. My position was changed, and with this change came increased expenditure. Anthony cost much money, he was of no use in the farm, and he threw about money as he liked. But not so only. I rebuilt nearly the whole of the house; I might have spent this money in paying off the mortgage, or in reducing it, but instead of that I rebuilt and enlarged the house. I thought that my new position required it, and the old farmhouse was small and inconvenient, and ill-suited to my new position. But I had no fear. The mortgagee did not require the money. Then, of late we have had bad times, and I have had the drag of the mortgage on me. A little while ago I had notice that I must repay the whole amount. I did not consider this as serious, and I sought to stay it off. The messenger who has now come from Exeter, comes with a final demand for the entire sum. The times are precarious. The Duke of Monmouth has landed. No one knows what will happen, and the mortgagee calls in his money. I have not got it."

"Then what is to be done?"

Bessie became white as the wax of the candle, and *the flame flick*ered because the candle shook in her hand.

"Only one thing can be done. Only you can save Hall—save me."

"I! Oh, my father!" Bessie's heart stood still, she feared what she should hear.

"Only you can save us," pursued the old man. "You and I will be driven out of this place, will lose Hall, lose the acres that for three centuries have been dressed with our sweat, lose the roof that has covered the Cleverdons for many generations, unless you save us."

"But—how, father?" she asked, yet knew what the answer would be.

"You must marry Anthony Crymes at once. Then only shall we be safe, for the Crymes family will find the money required to secure Hall."

"Father," pleaded Bessie, "ask for help from some one else! Borrow the money elsewhere."

"In times such as this, when we are trembling in revolution, and none knows what the issue will be, no one will lend money. I have no friend save Squire Crymes. There is no help to be had anywhere else. Here—" said the old man, irritably—"Here are a bundle of accounts of moneys owed to me, that I cannot get back now. I have sent round to those in my dept, and it is the same cry from all. The times are against us—wait till all is smooth, and then we will pay. In the mean time my state is desperate. I offered to Anthony but this day to forgive the past and receive him back to Hall—but the offer came too late. Hall is lost to him, lost to you, lost to me, lost for ever, unless you say yea."

"Oh! Luke! Luke!" cried Bessie; "let me speak

first with him;" then suddenly changed her mind and tone, "Oh, no! I must not speak to him—to him above all, about this."

"Bessie!" said the old man; his tone was altered from that which was usual to him. He had hectored and domineered over her, had shown her little kindness and small regard, but now he spoke in a subdued manner, with entreaty. "Bessie! look at my grey hairs. I had hoped that all future generations of Cleverdons would have thought of me with pride, as he who made the family; but, instead, they will curse me as he who cast it forth from its home and brought it to destruction."

Bessie did not speak, her eyes were on the candle, the flame was nigh on sinking, a gap had formed under the wick, and the wax was running down into the socket as water into a well.

"I have hitherto commanded, and have usually been obeyed," continued the old man, "but now I must entreat. I am to be dishonoured through my children, one—my son—has left me and taken to himself another home, and defies me in all things. My daughter, by holding out her hand, could save me and all my hopes and ambitions, and she will not. Will she have me—me, an old grey-headed father, kneel at her feet?" He put his hands to the arms of his seat to help him to rise from the chair that he might fall before her.

"Father!" She uttered a cry, and, at the shock that shuddered through her, the flaming wick sank into the socket, and there burnt blue as a lambent ghost *of a* flame. "O father!—wait!—wait!"

"How long am I to wait? The answer must be given to-night; the doom of our house is sealed within a few hours, or the word of salvation must be spoken. Which shall it be? The messenger who is here carries my answer to Exeter, and, at the same time, if you agree, the demand for a licence, that you may be married at once. No delay is possible."

"Let me have an hour—in my room?"

"No; it must be decided at once."

"Oh, father—at once?" She watched the blue quiver of light in the candle socket. "Very well—when the light goes out you shall have my answer."

He said no other word, but watched her pale face, looking weird in the upward flicker of the dying blue flame, and her eyes rested on that flame, and the flicker was reflected in them—now bright, then faint, swaying from side to side as a tide.

Then a mass of wax fell in, fed the flame, and it shot up in a golden spiral, revealing Bessie's face completely.

"Father! I but just now said to Fox Crymes 'Never! never! never!'"

She paused, the flame curled over.

"Father! within a few minutes must I go forth to him and withdraw the 'Never?'"

He did not answer but he nodded. She had raised her eyes from the dying flame to look at him.

Again her eyes fell on the light.

"Father! If I withdraw my 'Never,' will you withdraw yours about Anthony?—never to forgive him—never to see him in Hall—never to count him as your son?"

The flame disappeared—the old man thought it was extinguished, but Bessie saw it still as a blue bead rolling on the molten wax; it caught a thread of wick and shot up again.

"Father! I do not ask you to promise, but to say perhaps."

"So be it. Perhaps."

The flame was out.

Bessie walked calmly to the door, felt for the key, turned it, went forth, still holding the extinguished candle in her hand. It was to her as if all that made life blessed and bright to her had gone out with that flame.

She went into the parlour and composedly put out her hand to Fox.

"Take me," she said; "I have withdrawn the 'Never.' I am yours!"

CHAPTER XLIV.

LADING THE COACH.

Fox hastened back to Kilworthy. He also knew that time was precious. His father was in a fever of excitement about the landing of Monmouth, and was certain to give him all the assistance in his power both with men and with money. Not only so, but he would so compromise himself, that in the event of the miscarriage of Monmouth's venture, he would run the extremest risk of life and fortune.

He had for some time past been acting for the

Duke in enlisting men in his cause. The whole of the West of England was disaffected to the King—was profoundly irritated at his overbearing conduct, and alarmed lest he should attempt to bring the realm back to Popery. The gentry were not, however, disposed to risk anything till they saw on which side Fortune smiled. They had suffered so severely during the Civil War, and at the Restoration had encountered only neglect, so that the advisability of caution was well burnt into their minds. The Earl of Bedford, who owned a vast tract of property about Tavistock, secretly favoured Monmouth, but was indisposed to declare himself. He had not forgotten—he bitterly resented the execution of his son, Lord William Russell, for complicity in the Rye House Plot—a plot as mythical as the Popish Plot revealed by Titus Oates, and which he attributed to the resentment of the Catholic party. He was willing that Squire Crymes should act for him, and run the risk of so doing.

Fox had the shrewdness to see this, but his father was too sincere an enthusiast, and too indifferent to his own fortunes, to decline the functions of agent for Monmouth pressed on him by the Earl of Bedford.

"What dost want? I cannot attend to thee," said Mr. Crymes, when his son entered the room. On the table lay piled up several bags tied with twine, and sealed.

"What do I want?" retorted Fox. "Why, upon my honour, you have forestalled my thought. I came for money; and, lo! there it is."

"I am busy," said the old man. "Dost' see, though

it be night, I am ready for a journey? I have the coach ordered to be prepared. I must travel some way ere daydawn."

"If you are going away, father, so much the more reason why you should give ear to me now."

"Nay, I cannot. I have much to do—many things to consider of. I would to God thou wast coming with me! But, as in the case of those that followed Gideon, only such as be whole-hearted and stout may go to the Lord's army."

"I have the best plea—a Scriptural one—for biding at home," laughed Fox; "for I am going to be married. Ere ten days be passed, Bess Cleverdon will be my wife."

"I am sorry for her. I esteem her too well," said the old man, impatiently. "But away with thy concerns; this is no time for marrying and giving in marriage, when we approach the Valley of Decision in which Armageddon will be fought. Go out into the yard and see if any be about the coach."

"I passed through the court in coming here. The coach was there—no horses, no servants."

"I must take the coach," said the old man. "I was a poor rider when young; I cannot mount a horse now in my age."

"Then verily, father, thy coach and four will be out of place in the Valley of Decision," scoffed Fox. "Of what good canst thou be in an army—in a battle—if unable to mount a horse? Stay at home, and let the storm of war blow across the sky. If thou wantest Scripture to justify thee, here it is: 'Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.'"

"The cause of true religion is in jeopardy," retorted the father. "I know what is right to be done, and I will do it. Go I must, for, though I cannot fight myself, my counsel may avail; and I bear to the Duke the very nerves of war." He pointed to the money-bags.

"I did not know thou hadst so much gold by thee, in the house," said Fox, going to the table, taking up, and weighing one of the bags.

"A hundred pound in each," said his father; "and good faith! I had not the coin. There, thou art right. But it has fallen out that the Earl of Bedford has called to mind certain debts to me, or alleged debts for timber, wool, and corn, and has sent orders to the steward to pay me for the same in gold. The Earl—" he stopped himself. "But there, I will say no more. The money is not mine."

"What, no real debt?"

"I say nothing. I take it with me, whether mine or not signifies naught to thee; it goes to the Duke of Monmouth."

"It concerns me, father, for I want, and must have money. I am shortly to be married, and I cannot be as a beggar. I have sent to the College of Arms for licence to change my name, and that will cost me a hundred pounds. I want the money."

"I cannot let you have it."

"But it is here. Let me toll it."

"Never—get thee away, I cannot attend to thee now."

"But, father; I cannot be left thus, your clearing away all the money in the house, and I about to marry,

who can say but Armageddon may turn all contrary to your expectations."

"Put off the marriage till I return."

"It cannot be put off. What if all goes wrong, and the land be given up to the Jesuits? What then with thy neck? What with thy money? Will either be spared. Give me, at least, the gold, and take care of thy neck thyself, then one will be safe at all events."

"If it be the Lord's will," said the old man, with a look of dignity, "I am well content. If I follow Lord William Russell's steps I follow a good man, and die in a righteous cause. I shall seal my faith with my blood."

"And the Jesuits will lay their hands on all thou hast——"

"I have nothing. Kilworthy belongs to thy sister. As for what I have saved, it is not much. I have some bills, I have contributed to the suffering saints, I have helped the cause of the Gospel with my alms——"

"More the reason, if so much has been fooled away that this should be secured. The cause of the Gospel is the providing for thine own household, and there never yet was a more suffering saint than myself. I will lay hands on this coin, and take it as my wedding portion."

"Hands off!" shouted the old man, half drawing his sword. "Though thou art mine own son I would run thee through the body or ever thou shouldst touch this, which is for the justest, truest, holiest cause, and I am a steward that must give account for the same. *I will give thee twenty* pounds."

"That will not pay the clerks of the Herald's College."

"I will not pay for that—to change the ancient name of Crymes for another."

"What! Not when the one name brings to me a vile twenty pounds, and the other name will give me a thousand pounds a year!"

"Heaven gave thee to me, for my sorrow," said the old man, "and in giving thee to me, covered thee with my name. It is tempting heaven to cast it off and take another. But there! I have no time for talk. Would God I could persuade thee to draw a sword for the good cause."

"Not a bodkin!" mocked Fox, who was very angry. The sight of the bags of money fevered him. "But you have one after your own heart ridden forward, and that is 'Tony Cleverdon. I heard as much from Luke."

"'Tony Cleverdon!" repeated Mr. Crymes. "I am rejoiced at that. Ah! would that Providence had given him to me as a son! 'Tony Cleverdon! That is well. He will take my place at the head of the brigade from this region. My infirmities and age will not suffer me to ride, but I will speak to the Duke, and he shall be the captain over our men from Tavistock. But come now, and be of good mind for once, and help me, lad." The old man took up one of the money bags. "I have sent the men to the kitchen for their supper, and I would remove all these to the carriage whilst they are away, as they know naught about the treasure, and it is well that they should remain ignorant. Not that I misdoubt them, they be honest men and true,

and would not rob me of a shilling, but their tongues might clack at the taverns, and so it get noised that there was money in the coach, and come to the ears of scoundrels, and we be waylaid. Not but what we shall be well provided against them; for I shall be armed, so also the footman on the box beside the driver, and there will be two riders armed, with each a horse led to hitch on when we go up the hills, so as to have six to pull the coach up. And I shall have two of our recruits to go on, with carbines, ahead, and spy about, that there be no highwaymen awaiting us on the road. So! Anthony Cleverdon is gone on without tarrying for me to ask him. That is like the lad. 'Fore Heaven! even were a party of footpads to waylay us, if I said, 'Gentlemen of the Road, I am travelling for the Protestant cause, bearing specie to the camp, and we are rising against the Jesuits and the Inquisition, and the Pope of Rome, join us and march along!' I believe not one of them would touch a coin, but all would give a cheer and come along. Why, who will stay us? There is but the High Sheriff, John Rowe, is a Catholic, and perhaps three or four more among the gentry, and among the common, simple folk ne'er an one that would stay us, and not wish us God speed! Come, lend a hand with the bags; I will hold the candle. Let all be stowed away whilst the men are supping."

In the courtyard of Kilworthy stood the glass coach of Mr. Crymes—a huge and cumbrous vehicle, so cumbrous that it required four horses to draw it along the roads, and six to convey it to the top of a hill.

Travelling on the highways was not smooth and swift in those days; the roads were made by filling the ruts with unbroken stones of all sizes, unbroken as taken off the fields. Where there was a slough, faggots were laid down, and the horses stumbled over the faggots and soused into the mire between them as best they could. Travelling in saddle was in those days slow, especially in wet weather, but travelling in a coach was a snail-like progress, and the outrunners had not to exert themselves extraordinarily to distance the horses, for they could trip along on the turf at the side of the ways, which were part slough, part rubble-beds of torrents, without the inconvenience and perils that assailed the travellers on wheels.

Mr. Crymes always journeyed in his coach, for, owing to an internal malady, he was unable to sit a horse; but a coach-journey tried him greatly, owing to his age, and the jolting he went through in his conveyance.

The courtyard was deserted, the monstrous vehicle looked in the darkness like a hearse, so black and massive was it, only the flicker from the reflection of the light relieved its sombreness as Mr. Crymes crept round to the back with his lantern, and a bag of gold under one arm.

Fox sulkily obeyed his father. At the back of the carriage was the boot that had a flap which, when unlocked, fell down. The old man fumbled for and produced the key, unfastened the receptacle, and thrust his bag inside.

"Now give me thine, and go for two more," said

he, "and I will tick them off in my note-book as they are placed in the boot."

"It is a pity, father," said Fox, "that you have not a stouter lock."

"Nay, it sufficeth," answered Mr. Crymes. "None will know what is fastened within. If we were—and the chance is not like to come—overpowered by highwaymen, I trow they would demand the key and open the boot though the lock were twice as strong. My own luggage shall travel in the front boot. Go, lad, fetch me more of the gold. Even in the best cause men will fight faintly unless they be paid."

Fox obeyed, and brought all the bags in pairs to the carriage, and saw the old man stow them away. He was in an ill-humour, and cursed his father's folly in his heart.

"How if the venture fails?" he asked, "and then you be led to Tyburn. It will be a sorry end to have lost all this gold as well as thy life. Thy life is thine own to throw away, but the gold I may claim a right to. I am thy son, I want it, I am about to be married, and have a use for the money; now it will all go into the pockets of wretched country clowns, who will shoulder a musket and trail a pike for a shilling—if it were given to me I could put it to good usage."

"Come with me to my study," said the old man. "Here come Jock and Jonas from the kitchen. Come along with me, and thou shall have twenty pound in silver and gold, and a hundred more in bills that may be discounted when the present troubles are over."

"I will ride with thee, father, some part of the road *as thy guard*—till the daybreak."

CHAPTER XLV.

UNLADING.

THE hour was past midnight and before dawn when the great coach of Squire Crymes approached the long hill of Black Down. The road from Plymouth to Exeter was one of singular loneliness for a considerable part of its course, but in no part did it traverse country so desolate and apart from population, as in the stretch, a posting-stage between Tavistock and Okehampton, a distance of sixteen miles. It ran high up on the flanks of Dartmoor, mounting it nearly nine hundred feet above the level of the sea, with the trackless waste of the forest on one hand, and on the other a descent by ragged and rugged lanes to distant villages. Lydford, almost the sole one at all near the road, was severed from it by ravines sawn through the rock, through which the moor rivers thundered and boiled, ever engaged in tearing for themselves a deeper course.

Precisely because this track of road was the most inhospitable and removed from human haunts, was it one of the safest to travel even in the most troublous times, for no one dreamed of traversing it after night-fall, when aware that for sixteen miles he would be cut off from help in the event of a breakage of his carriage or the laming of a horse; and as no one ever thought of taking this road except in broad day when it was fairly occupied by trains of travellers, no footpads and

highwaymen thought it worth their while to try their fortunes upon it.

Roads in former days to a large extent made themselves, or were made by the travellers. In the first place the bottoms of valleys were deserted by them as much as might be, because of the bogs that were there, and the lines of communication were laid on the ridges of hills above the springs that undermined and made spongy the soil. Then the roads were traced before the enclosures were made, and originally were carried as directly as possibly from point to point. But obstacles, sometimes temporary, intervened: perhaps a slough, perhaps a rut of extraordinary depth had been torn into the road, and became the nucleus of a pool; perhaps an unduly hard and obstinate prong of rock appeared after the upper surface had been worn through. Then the stream of travellers swayed to one side, and gave the course of the road a curve, which curve was followed when hedges were run up. These hedges following the curves stereotyped the line of road, which thenceforth became permanently irregular in course.

A roadway in those days was about as easy to go over, and to go over with expedition, as the beach of Brighton. Consequently it was slow work journeying on such highways on horseback; and it was journeying like a snail, when travelling in a coach. The outrunner had no very arduous task to outstrip the horses. He put his foot on the turf by the road-side, and tripped along at his ease, leaping the puddles and stones which were occasional by the road-side; whereas they were *continuous in the* roadway.

Fox rode sulkily beside the coach, as it rolled and rocked along the highway from Tavistock to the North. The night was over-cast after midnight, as it had been before the turn of the night; no wind was blowing, nor did rain fall, but the aspect was utterly sombre and uncheering. Every light was out in such houses as were passed, and not a passenger was met, or overtook the carriage that lumbered along, sending squirts of muddy water to this and that side as the wheels plunged into ruts. Fox came occasionally to the coach window, and said something to his father, and was bespattered from head to foot, boots, clothes, and face.

Presently the point was attained where the road left the valley of the brawling Tavy and climbed Black Down. There was a directness in the way in which old roads went at hills that was in keeping with the characters of our forefathers. A height had to be surmounted, and the road was carried up it with a rush, and with none of our modern zig-zags and easy sweeps. The hill must be ascended, and the sooner it was surmounted the better. Now the great road to the North from Plymouth by Tavistock had the huge hogsback of Black Down to surmount, and it made no hesitating and leisurely attempts at it; it went up four hundred feet as direct as a bowline.

On reaching the foot of the Down, the driver paused and the footman on the box dismounted. The men with the spare horses went ahead and hitched on their beasts. Then ensued loud cries and shouts, and the cracking of whips, each man attending to a horse, and encouraging it to do its uttermost to haul the great

coach up the hill. The only men who kept their places were the driver on the box, and Mr. Crymes within.

Now a good many other coaches had halted at the same spot, and halting there had ground away the soil, so as to make a very loose piece of road; moreover, the water falling on the road had run down it to the lowest level, and finding this rotten portion there had accumulated and done its utmost to assist the disintegration. The result was that the wheels sank in liquid mire to the axles, and six horses did little more than churn the filth and jerk the coach about.

Mr. Crymes having been subjected to several violent relapses as the coach was half pulled out of the pit and then sank back again, thrust his head out of the window and called: "Wilkey! will it not be best to have all the horses harnessed? There is rope in the box."

"Well, perhaps it were best, your worship."

Thereupon much discussion ensued, and much time was spent in attaching ropes; and finally, with great hooting, and with imprecations as well, and some words of encouragement, the whole team was set in motion, and the coach was hauled out of the slough, and began slowly to snail the way up the two-mile ascent.

Again Mr. Crymes thrust forth his head.

"Wilkey! Perhaps if Mr. Anthony were to ride forward, it might be an encouragement to the horses to go along with more spirit."

"Your worship, I do not see Mr. Fox! I beg pardon, *Mr. Anthony. I think* he has returned."

"What! without a farewell? The boy is unmannerly, and inconsiderate of what is due to a father. But such is the decay of the world, alas! Go on Wilkey! there was no necessity for all the men and the horses to halt to hear what I had to say to thee."

Again there ensued a cracking of whips, objurgations and cheers, a great straining at ropes, and a forward movement of the coach.

The vehicle proceeded some way with more ease, for the stream of water that had here flowed over the road had smoothed it and cleared it of obstructions.

Presently the men and horses came to a dead halt and there ensued ahead much conversation, some expostulation, and commotion.

Again Mr. Crymes' head was thrust out of the window, and he called, "Wilkey! I say; come here, Wilkey! What is the matter? Why dost thou not go on? Has any rope broken?"

But several minutes elapsed before Wilkey responded to his master's call, and when finally, in answer to further and more urgent shouts, he did come, it was not alone, but attended by several of the other men, dragging with them by the arms a man whom they had found in the road.

"What is it? Who is he? What does he here?"

"Oh, I will be good! I promise—I swear, I will be good! I'll say my prayers! I'll not get drunk any more! I do not want to go inside—I'd rather walk a hundred miles and run by night and day, than have this carriage stop for me, and hear——"

"Who are you? What are you doing here?" asked

Mr. Crymes. "Some of you bring the lantern. Let me look at him. Is he a footpad?"

"No—never—never robbed any one in my life. I pray you do not ask me to step in. I thank thee, I had rather walk, than gather to thy side. I really will be good. 'Pon my soul I will. Drive on, coachee!"

"Why—'fore Heaven!" exclaimed Mr. Crymes, "this is Mr. Solomon Gibbs—and, the worse for liquor. Mr. Gibbs, Mr. Gibbs!"

"Eh!" said the gentleman, coming to the coach door, "why, by cock! it isn't my Ladye at all! By my soul, you must excuse me, Master Crymes. I was in that state of fright! At this time of night, and on Black Down! I thought it could be no other than the Death Coach, and that my Ladye wi' the ashen face was inside, and would make me ride by her."

Then half-humorously, but half-scared still, and not wholly sober, Mr. Solomon Gibbs trolled forth in broken tones,

I'd rather walk a hundred miles
And run by night and day,
Than have that carriage halt for me,
And hear my Ladye say—
"Now pray step in, and make no din,
Step in with me to ride;
There's room I trow, by me for you,
And all the world beside."

"Why, how came you here?" asked Mr. Crymes. "My men took you for a highwayman, and might ha fired their holsters or carbines at you."

"*And I might* ask, how came you here at night

your coach! By heavens! You do not know the scare you gave me, at the very midnight, too—and I on the very road that my Ladye goes over in her Death Coach! But—I thought it stopped for me, and that upset my mind altogether. When I saw something—black horses, and a coach coming along, I tried to skip out of the way and hide somewhere, but, not a hiding-place could I find on the moor. I did suppose at first that it was on its way for my poor niece—for Urith, but when it stopped—" he shivered. "I felt my heart go into my boots. And I have been looking for him everywhere, in every ale-house, and not so much as a thread of his coat, nor the breath of a word as to his whereabouts, and she—so ill—dying. I should not be surprised, dead. On my oath! when I saw the coach come along, and at or about midnight, I made sure my Ladye was on her way to Willsworthy, to fetch Urith, but when the coach stopped—when it stopped—" again he shuddered.

"Whom are you seeking?" asked Mr. Crymes.

"Anthony, to be sure, my nephew-in-law. But I say, Justice, thou art a religious man and a bit of a Puritan; now solve me this. When I thought this was my Lady's coach, and that she was about to put out her bony hand, and to wave me to come in, then I swore and protested I'd not touch another drop of drink and be good as any red-letter day saint. Now, as the carriage is not hers, but yours, and instead of the Lady wi' the Ashen Face it is the Right Worshipful Justice Crymes, what say you? Does it hold? Mind you, the oath was taken under misapprehension. Does it hold?"

"What is that you say, Master Gibbs, about your niece? Is she really so ill?"

"Ill! So ill that I made sure the coach was on its way for her. I've been running about the world all night like the Wandering Jew, to first one ale-house and then another, after Anthony. Confound the fellow! what does he mean, running away, hiding where none can find him, when Urith is so ill?"

"What ails her?" asked Mr. Crymes. "Step in by me——"

"No. 'Fore Heaven, I don't like the risk. You may be my Lady in disguise, and I may rub my eyes and find that a trick has been put on me. I will into no coach whatever to-night. I will keep to my own feet, though, indeed, they are so shaken with much running about that I can't rely on them. I'll to the surgeon and have him examine them, and let me know why they do not hold up under me as they was wont."

"How long has Urith been ill?"

"Now, look here!" said Mr. Solomon Gibbs, approaching the window closer, and lowering his voice. "Poor thing, poor thing! Prematurely, and the babe dead—she out of her mind, crazed like—the house upside down, and me running about the country, looking into every ale-house I can call to mind, to make inquiries after Anthony, and not a footprint of him anywhere, and he has gone off with a horse—the apple-grey—you know him."

"I can tell thee where Anthony Cleverdon is—he has followed the highest call—the voice of religion and

of his country's need. He has ridden away to join the Duke of Monmouth."

"Whew!" whistled Solomon. "And his wife like every minute to die! I'll go back and tell her. This is ugly tidings—he tried to give me a blow 'gainst all laws of the game, this past day, but that I forgive him. But—to run off and never leave a word at home, and Urith dying! That I'll never forgive."

"If I encounter him in the camp, I will tell him the tidings; and now I must along. This delay has been great. Wilkey! what are you standing there agape for? Urge the horses on; by this time we should have been at the top of Black Down. Fare thee well, Master Gibbs."

He waved his hand out of the window.

The whips were cracked, shouts, oaths, and entreaties recommenced, and the vehicle was again in motion. Mr. Solomon Gibbs remained standing.

But the carriage had not gone forward many yards before Mr. Gibbs came striding up to the window; he put his head through and said, "Your worship! Are you aware that the boot-flap behind is down?"

"Boot—behind!" almost screamed Mr. Crymes. "Let me out! Heigh! Stay the horses! Wilkey! the door!"

He scrambled out of the coach, called for the lantern, and ran behind.

The flap was down, the boot open—and empty.

The coach had been unladen either at the slough at the foot of the hill, or during the commotion occasioned by the discovery of Mr. Solomon Gibbs.

CHAPTER XLVI.

AN EVENING SO CLEAR.

LUKE paced his room at the parsonage, Peter Tavy, the greater part of the night. He had much, very much to trouble him. Urith was seriously ill. Mistress Penwarne was with her, otherwise she would have been left to servants who, with the best intentions, might not have known what to do. Her fainting fits had continued one after another, and then had been succeeded by an event which left her in fever and delirium.

Luke's hands clenched with wrath as he thought of Anthony—Anthony, to whom had been entrusted the care of this precious jewel, who had undervalued her, wearied of her, neglected her, and broken her heart, perhaps destroyed her young life. He was gone, before, indeed, that he suspected how ill Urith was, and unaware of the danger she was in. Luke could not communicate with him, and if he did send a message after him, this might reach him when too late, or when unable to return. Urith's life hung on a thread; and, as Luke paced his room, he could not resolve whether it were better to pray that it should be spared or taken.

If her life were spared, it would be to what? To a renewal of misunderstandings, to the greatest of unhappiness, probably to deep-seated, embittered estrange-

ment. Anthony and Urith were unsuited to each other —she sullen, moody, and breaking forth into bursts of passion; he impulsive, reckless, and without consideration for others. Was it conceivable that they could become so tempered and altered as to agree? He did not think this possible, and he folded his hands to pray for her release; but again he shrank from framing such a prayer lest, by making it, he should bring upon himself a sense of guilt, should his petition be answered.

What was to become of Urith if she lived? Best of all that Anthony should fall on the battlefield fighting for liberty and his religion. That would ennoble a life that lacked dignity, that had been involved in one disaster after another, that had alienated the hearts most attached—his father's, his own, Luke's, and, lastly, his wife's. But what if it were so? What if Urith were left a widow?

Luke's heart gave a leap, and then stood still and grew faint. She would then be free. Dare he—he, Luke—think of her, love her, once more? He had the strength of moral power to think out the situation, and he saw now that it must ever remain impossible that they should unite. He had his sacred calling, that brought on him obligations he dare not cast aside; and Urith's husband must be one to live at Willsworthy, and recover her property from the ruin into which it had fallen by devoting thereto all the energies of his mind and body. Moreover, the radical difference in their characters, in the entire direction of their minds, must separate them, and make them strangers in all that is

best and stoutest in the inner nature. No, not even were she left a widow, could Luke draw nearer to her.

With his delicate conscientiousness, he took himself to task for having for a moment anticipated such a contingency springing out of the possible death of Anthony. Then Luke turned his thoughts to Bessie, and saw almost as dark a cloud over Hall as that which hung upon Willsworthy. If Anthony and Urith were unsuited for each other, far greater was the difference which existed between Fox and Bessie. Luke knew Fox —knew his unscrupulousness, his greed, his meanness, his moral worthlessness; and he valued no woman he knew higher than he did Bessie, for her integrity, her guilelessness, and self-devotion. By no right could Fox claim the hand of Bessie, for by no possibility could he make her happy. To unite her to him was to ensure the desolation of her whole life, the blighting of all that was beautiful in her. It was to consign her to inevitable heartbreak. She would take an oath to do what was impracticable; she could neither honour nor love such a man as Fox; she would strive to do both, but must fail. Luke vowed that nothing would induce him to pronounce the marriage benediction over their heads.

Luke was still up and awake, but kneeling at his table, and with his head in his hands, when a rattle of gravel at his window-panes brought him to his feet with a start, and he went to see who was in want of him. He opened the casement and looked out, to see Mr. Solomon Gibbs below. Luke descended and unfastened the door.

"Is Urith worse?" was his breathless question.

"Whew! I can say nothing," answered Mr. Gibbs. "I am cold. Always chillest before dawn, it is said, and daybreak cannot be a bowshot off. What dost think? Highway robbery on Black Down—this night Justice Crymes plundered whilst on his way to Exeter in his glass coach. The rascals prised open the boot behind, and though there were six men with the carriage, no one either saw the robber or heard him at work. It must have been done whilst they were urging the horses up the ascent; but it is passing strange. The highwayman must have been mounted, for he could not have escaped with the plundered goods had he not bestrid a horse. How it was done, when it was done, and by whom, no one can tell anything, and by cock! they're all talking, and every one has an opinion."

"Where is Mr. Crymes now?"

"Gone on. He was as one distraught—what with losing his money, and the call of the business he was on."

"His money taken!"

"Ay, and more than his own—in all about four hundred pounds, that was to be conveyed to the Duke of Monmouth at Taunton. He told me about it, as I have to go to Mr. Cleverdon about it, and see that the neighbourhood be searched for footpads. It must have been done quickly, for Fox rode behind the carriage, and now and then alongside it, to the rise of Black Down, when he turned and went back to Kilworthy. 'Twas dexterously done, and must have been the deed of a skilled hand. Now what I am come here for is that I do not care myself to go to Squire Cle-

verdon. There has not been pleasantness between him and my family, so, seeing your light, I came here to ask you to do the matter. Tell him that steps must be taken to have the neighbourhood searched for strangers—strangers they must be. We've none here could do the trick; all honest folk. And I can be of better service going round to the ale-houses. I am well known there, and there I can pick up information that may be of use. Every cobbler to his bench, and that is mine. Will you go to Hall as soon as you can in the morning?"

"I will do so, certainly. Now tell me about Urith."

"Urith! I cannot. I have not seen her; not been near Willsworthy since you came away. I have been going about the country, to the taverns looking for Anthony, and not hearing any tidings of him."

"I can tell you where he is."

"I know myself now. Squire Crymes informed me that he had ridden across the moor towards Exeter, also bound for Taunton. Let me sit down. Nothing can be done yet; every one sleeps. The Hare and Hounds at Cudlip Town will be closed. Do you hap to have any cyder that can be got at? I am dry as old hay."

Mr. Gibbs took a seat.

"Lord, I have had a day," said he, "enough to parch up all the juices of the body. There was that affair with Tony to begin with, and I should not be surprised if the cut of the quarterstaff he gave her—"

"What!" exclaimed Luke, with a cry. "He strike *her!*"

"Well—not that, exactly. He and I were playing at quarterstaff, when he gave me a cut out of all rules, and might have laid my skull bare had not Urith caught it on her hand. I doubt not it stung. It must have stung, and that may have begun the trouble. No—he never ill-treated her to that extent, intentionally, but they have not been happy together, and she has been very miserable of late."

Luke sighed, and said nothing. He had covered his face with his hand.

"Poor wench!" continued Uncle Sol, "she has no pleasure in anything now—that is to say, she has not for some while, not even in my stories and songs. Everything has gone contrary. Anthony has found fault with all I do—has complained of the state of the farm and the buildings, as if I could better matters without money. He has been discontented with everything, and Urith has seen it and fretted over it, and now things are at their worst; he is away; she dying, if not dead; and, Heaven help us—here, have you any cyder! I am dried up with troubles."

"Come!" said Luke, "I can bear to be here no longer; I will go with you to Willsworthy; I must know how Urith is. I cannot endure this uncertainty longer."

Luke walked to Willsworthy with Mr. Gibbs, who was somewhat reluctant to pass Cudlip Town without knocking up the taverner of the Hare and Hounds to tell him what had happened that night on Black Down, and to obtain from him a little refreshment before he traversed the last stage of his walk.

The grey of dawn appeared over the eastern ridge

of moors by the time Willsworthy was reached, and the birds were beginning to pipe and cry.

No one had gone to bed that night in the house, a rushlight was burning in the hall, unregarded, a long column of redhot snuff. The front door was open. Mr. Gibbs strode into the kitchen, and found a servant-maid there dozing on the settle. He sent her upstairs to call Mistress Penwarne down, and the old lady descended. When she saw Luke, she was glad, and begged him to come upstairs with her and see Urith. It was possible that his presence might calm her. She was excited, wandering in mind, and troubled with fancies.

Luke mounted to the room where Urith was.

By the single candle contending with the grey advancing light of dawn he saw her, and was alarmed at her condition. Her face was pale as death, save for two flames in her cheeks, and her eyes, unusually large, had a feverish fire in them. She was sitting up. Mistress Penwarne had striven all night to induce her to lie down, but Urith incessantly struggled to rise, and she had taken advantage of her nurse's absence to do so.

Luke went to her side and spoke. She looked up at him with hot eyes, and without token of recognition.

"I have killed him," she said. "I did it so!"—she raised her hand, clenched it, and struck downwards, imitating the action of Fox. "He fell on the hearthstone, as mother said he would, and then I tried to strike him again, and again, but was torn away." She began to grapple in the air with uplifted hands.—"Where *is the knife?* Where are the gloves? That for Urith!"

Luke took her burning right hand, and said, "Lie down, lie down and sleep. You must be very quiet, you must not distress yourself. Anthony is well."

"Anthony is dead. I killed him. And my baby is dead. They killed it, because I had killed Anthony."

"Anthony is alive, he is but little hurt."

"Where is he? You have carried him away and buried him. I know he is dead. Why does he not come if he is not dead? I am sure he is dead. Look!" —she again struggled with her hand to be free, and show how the blow was struck—"Look! You shall see how I did it."

"No—Urith, lie down! Hush! I will pray with you."

Luke knelt at her side, but she turned her head impatiently away. "I will not be prayed for. I cannot pray. I killed him. I am glad I killed him, he was untrue to me. He had always loved Julian, and he grew tired of me. I killed him. I would not give him up. Julian should not have him back."

"Listen—I will pray."

"It is of no use. I do not regret that I struck him—I struck him to the heart. Answer me. Is there forgiveness if there be no repentance?"

She looked eagerly, almost fiercely, at Luke, who did not know what to answer. She was, it seemed to him, partly conscious, but partly only, of what had taken place—to be in a state of half dream. She knew him, she could reason, but she believed herself to have done that which was done actually by Fox Crymes.

"There!" she exclaimed, and threw back her head

on the pillow. "It cannot be. I am glad I killed him. I could not do other. He brought it on himself. He was untrue to me. He loved Julian all his life, all but for a little while, when he fancied me. But you—you gave him to me at the altar. He could not remain mine. He was drawn away. But I would not let Julian have him. She defied me—it was a fair strife. She won up to a certain point, then I won the last point. Look! I will show you how I did it."

Once more she strove to sit up in the bed, and she raised her hand, and clenched it.

"Do not be afraid. I have no knife now. They have taken it away, to wash off the blood. I have heard them cleaning it. But my hand has the stain. That they cannot clean away. I had his blood on me once before—at the Drift. But then I did not know what that meant. See—this is how I did it. Here is a feather, a feather from my pillow. That will do. I will let you see how I killed him. I will strike him with the feather. Then take that and clean it too."

Luke held her wrist, and gently forced her back on her pillow.

"Urith!" he said, "leave him to God. Commit the matter to God. Do not take the revenging of your wrongs, real or fancied, into your own hands."

She allowed him to compose her for the moment, and closed her eyes. But presently she opened them again, and they were as full of fire as before.

"All is to pieces," she said, "all is broken, and Anthony broke it. Look here!" she plucked at her *neck,* and drew forth the halved token that was sus-

pended there. "Look, he gave me this—but it was false. He has only given me one half, he has given the other to Julian. If she comes here, I will put my hand in between the ribbon and her throat and throttle her. Then there will be three dead—Anthony and my baby and she; and I will die next. I hope I shall. I long to die."

"You must not desire death, it is sinful."

"But I do; I have nothing to live for. I have killed Anthony, and my baby is dead; they say it was born dead. Then I will kill Julian. Look! you shall see how I killed Anthony."

Again she struggled to sit up. Luke rose from his knees, and said, peremptorily, "Lie down!"

She obeyed, and he laid his cool hand on her burning temples. Below could be heard Solomon Gibbs tuning his fiddle, and then playing a few snatches.

Urith began to struggle under Luke's hand. "Do you hear? He is playing Anthony's song. Let him play it out, and sing it also."

Mistress Penwarne went to the head of the stairs and told Mr. Gibbs the request of Urith; then he put the violin to his chin and played:

An evening so clear
I would that I were
To kiss thy soft cheek
With the faintest of air.
The star that is twinkling
So brightly above,
I would that I were
To enlighten my love.

He played very softly, and as he played, the words of the song formed and passed faintly over Urith's lips. She may have recalled that evening when Anthony sang it, coming up the hill, and so was carried away from the torturing present back into a pleasant past.

If I were the seas,
That about the world run,
I'd give thee my pearls,
Not retaining of one.
If I were the summer,
With flowers and green,
I'd garnish thy temples,
And would crown thee my queen.

She was quieter, lying with eyes closed, murmuring the words as Uncle Sol played in the room below.

If I were a kiln,
All in fervour and flame,
I'd catch thee, and then be
Consumed in—the—same.

Luke lightly raised his hand, and put his finger to his lip.

Urith was asleep.

CHAPTER XLVII.

IN THE HALL GARDEN.

BESSIE was in the garden, the following afternoon, *with scissors and* an apron pinned up, trimming her

flowers, yet with her mind away from the plants; she was unhappy on her own account, yet strove after resignation, and she felt the consciousness of having done right in sacrificing herself for her father. He must now behave more kindly towards her; be more ready to listen to her intercession for poor Anthony. Poor Anthony! she had heard that morning that he was gone, gone to extreme risk, and that Urith was in danger. She had resolved that now she must go to Willsworthy and see her sister-in-law, and be of what use to her she could. Her father could no longer forbid that. Even if he did, in that she would not obey him.

She was stooping over her plants, with tears in her eyes, snipping, picking off dead flowers and leaves, and tying up the carnations, when she heard behind her the voice of Fox.

"What!—Busy?"

She winced, but rose, and with a little hesitation, held out her hand to him.

"Yes," she said, "I must do something with my hands to keep my thoughts from resting on troubles."

"Troubles! what troubles?"

Bessie gave him a look of reproach. "I must feel anxious about my brother, and also for Urith. How is it that you did not go as well as your father and my Anthony, to draw a sword for the good cause?"

"You ask that? Why, you are my attraction. I cannot leave you to venture my precious life in crack-brain undertakings. Before either of them returns, I suppose we shall be married."

"I am ready to fulfil my promise at any time," said Bessie.

"The sooner the better. Your father has already sent a messenger for a license. I shall not rest till you are mine."

Bessie knew that what Fox desired was to have his foot in Hall, and be established there in the position of heir, and that his pretence of caring for her was hollow. A colour came into her cheeks like the carnations she was tying up. "Enough of that," she said; "you know the conditions on which I take you?"

"Conditions! On my soul, I know of none."

"I told you that I did not love you, that I never had felt any love for you."

"You had the frankness to inform me of that, and to say that you had thrown your heart away on some one else, who declined the gift altogether."

Bessie bowed her head over her flowers.

"Yes, you told me that as we walked in the mud on the road; and then you refused me, but changed your mind before many hours had passed. I have no doubt that, when I am your husband, you will learn to love and admire me. However, this in no condition."

"No condition?" asked Bessie, rising, and looking him in the face. "Surely it is. I will take you, as you insist on it, and as my father desires it; but it must be on the understanding that you do not ask of me at once what is not in my power to give. I will try to love you, I promise you. I will strive with my whole heart to give you all I undertake; but I cannot do *that at once.*"

"Oh! you call that a condition. It is well. I accept it." There was a veiled sneer in his tone.

"Then, again," continued Bessie, "I made my father promise, if I gave my consent, that he would try to forgive Anthony."

"What! forgive and reinstate him?" asked Fox, sharply.

"There was nothing said about reinstating him. I suppose that my father and you have talked about Hall, and everything that concerns the property, and that you understand the circumstances fully."

"To be sure, I do," said Fox.

"Then, of course, I said nothing to him about reinstating Anthony, except in his old place in my father's heart. I believe that he will, himself, be glad to forgive the past. He cannot have cast out all the old love for, and pride in, Anthony."

"And he has promised that?"

"He has promised to try and forgive him. And now, Fox—I mean Tony Crymes—you are ready to take me, knowing that I do not love you, and can only try to render you that love which will be due from a wife to a husband?"

"Oh, yes! I take you as you are."

Of course he would. It was indifferent to him whether Elizabeth loved him or not, so long as his ambition and greed were satisfied.

"You see, Bess, I have a sharp tongue, and have made many enemies with it, who say in return sharp things of me, but with this difference—I say these things to their faces, they malign me behind my back.

When we are married you will know me better, and not believe all you hear said of me."

Bessie slightly shook her head, and stooped again over her carnations.

"There is one thing further," she said; "you must help me to persuade my father to be completely reconciled to Anthony."

"To be sure I will," answered Fox. "You want to see how good a fellow I am, in spite of all that is said of me. Here, take my hand, in token that I will do all you ask of me."

He gave her a cold, moist hand.

"And you promise me," she said, taking it, "on your honour that you will stand by me and back me up when I try to bring Anthony and my father together once more on the old terms?"

His mistrust was roused, and he did not answer at once. Her frank grey eyes rested full on his face, and his eyes fell before her steady glance.

"I will do what you will," he said; "but I do not suppose that your father will prove as wax in our hands, to mould as we like. Anthony has too deeply offended him, and Urith he will never see."

They dropped hands, for at that moment Julian entered the garden.

"I will go, see your father at once, and make trial in this matter," said he.

"You will find him in his room; he is looking at some papers."

Fox walked away, giving Julian a nod and a sneer *as he passed*, and entered the house.

Julian came hastily up to Bess.

"My dear Bessie! Is it true? Are you really going to take my brother? It cannot—it must not be. It is intolerable to be in the house with him when one is master, and he there only on sufferance, but to have him lord superior, and to be his slave!" Julian shivered.

"It is settled. I have passed my word, and I will not withdraw it."

"Bess! And after the lesson you have had from Anthony!"

"How a lesson, Julian?"

"Why, dear child, a lesson that it does not answer to marry without love."

"Surely, Julian, there was love there, on both sides."

"Oh! love! A passing caprice. Do you not know that Anthony always loved me? Why has he gone off to join the Duke of Monmouth? Do you suppose it is because he cares so greatly for the Protestant cause? Nay, wench, it is that he may escape from me—and from the sight of Urith. I am dangerous, Urith is odious to him. Better be where balls are flying than where my eyes flash with temptation and Urith's dart with jealousy."

"Julian! how canst thou speak thus?" Bessie stepped back from her visitor without offering to take her extended hands.

"Nay! do not be so offended. What I speak is the truth, and it all comes of marrying where there is no true affection. I am holding up thy brother as a warning to thee. Dost' think that Fox cares a rush for

thee? Not half a rush—all he looks to is Hall; he takes thee because he cannot have Hall without thee; and to have Hall is double pleasure to him, for he will have the place as his own, spiced with the satisfaction of having robbed his friend of it."

"I cannot help myself. I have passed my word and stand to it."

"Look how things are now at Willsworthy. There is Urith dying, maybe; and Anthony far away. I hope she may die. It is best so, for she will have no happiness any more with Anthony. He is weary of her, he has found out that he cannot find his rest in her, his heart is with me. It has come back to me. It flew away a little while, and now it has returned. Anthony is mine. He does not belong any more to Urith."

"Shame on you!" said Bessie. "But I am glad you have spoken on this matter. You have acted sinfully, you have striven to turn Anthony from his duty."

"I have done so. Urith and I have wrestled a hitch together, and I have given her the turn, a fair back—three points. That is what she knows, and she is eating her heart out at the thought."

"Do you know what has happened? Urith has become a mother of a dead child."

"Is it so?" Julian was startled and changed colour. She had not heard this, she only knew that Urith was ill.

"She is in high fever and derangement of mind. If *you have* driven Anthony away, driven him to his death

on the battlefield, and Urith also dies, then there will be the lives of all three you will be answerable for. It may be that Anthony was too hasty in marrying Urith, but once married, you should have left him alone. I do not believe, Julian, that he ever loved you. No, you may look at me in anger and doubt, but I am sure of it; I am his sister, I have seen and heard him, and if you fancy that he ever loved you, you are utterly in error. He never did. He never loved any girl till he saw Urith. She was his first love, not you. No, you never stirred his heart. He liked you. It flattered his vanity to see that you admired, almost worshipped him, but love you he did not. No, Julian, never—never! Urith was his first love, and, please God! will remain his only love."

Julian Crymes turned deadly white, and clenched her hands against her bosom.

"I saw what you were doing at that dance at the Cake's. Then you strove to draw him from his wife —then you threw the seeds of mistrust into her heart! You played a cruel and wicked game. But do not think, even although for a while you may have lured Anthony away from his wife, that you will separate them for ever. No! She was his first love, and to her he will return with redoubled love when this misunderstanding, this estrangement, is at an end—that is to say, if they live."

Bessie did not speak reproachfully, but sadly.

"Julian, you have been thoughtless, not malicious. I can tell you what the end will be, if Anthony do come back and find Urith dead. He will not go to

you, and throw himself at your feet. No; he will hate you with a hatred that will be lasting as his life. He will look on you as—if not his wife's murderer—at all events, as one who engalled the last hours of her life—who drew briars and thorns between them, tearing their hearts when they last met. What passed between them I cannot say; but something must have—something terrible—to account for her present condition, and for his absence. You are answerable for that. Your thoughtlessness, and Anthony's love of flattery, have contrived to ruin a home. Anthony and Urith might have been hapyy parents of a sweet, innocent little one, who would have bowed the heart of his grandfather, and wiped off it all the rust that has gathered there. That little life, with all it might have been to itself, or to others, is destroyed—by you! You and Anthony broke the heart of Urith, and brought about what has taken place. You cannot give back the little life—you cannot mend the wreckage of happiness you have brought about. Pray to God to have pity on you, and forgive you your sins!"

"I have no cause to repent," answered Julian, but she did not speak with her old confidence, and she spoke with veiled eyes, resting on the gravel of the walk. "I am sorry Urith is ill. I am sorry that she and Anthony are disappointed in their hopes. I have always loved Anthony. There is no sin in that. If Urith succeeded in drawing him away from me to whom he was all but assured, must I not feel it? May I not resent it? She stole him from me, and the blessing at *the* altar does not hallow her theft."

"What are you saying!" exclaimed Bessie, fixing her eyes on Julian. "Is it not a sin to love a man who has sworn before heaven that he will be true to one, and one only, and that not yourself? Is it not a sin to endeavour to make him false to his oaths?"

"I cannot force him to be true to Urith, and to love her. You are going to marry Fox. You will swear to love and honour him, and you know you can do neither. You will swear and be false to your oath, for it is an impossibility to keep it. Anthony swore, but he could not keep his oath, he found out that he had made a mistake——"

"You tried to persuade him that he had. Be sure he will return to Urith with tenfold deeper, sincerer love, and will bitterly rue that he let himself be deluded by you."

Julian stood brooding, with her eyes on the ground. She recalled how Anthony had brushed out her initials linked with his, and had interwoven in their place his own with those of Urith.

"There—" said she, hastily, "I came here for something else, than to be judged and condemned by you."

"I neither judge nor condemn you," answered Bessie, "but I tell you the truth. Anthony can never be yours, not even if Urith dies. He never did love you."

Julian stamped. "You do not know—he did, and I loved him."

"What token did he give that he cared for you?—answer me now."

"I loved him, I love him still. In love all is fair If I thought he did not love me——"

"Well," said Bessie, "what?" She looked steadily into Julian's eyes.

"I would dash my head against the stones, and kill thought for ever."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

A WEDDING DAY.

THE marriage took place so speedily after the report of the engagement as to take every one by surprise; for everywhere a wedding is expected to be much discussed and prepared for beforehand. In the case of Fox and Bessie, all was over almost as soon as it was known to be in the air.

No great ceremony was made of it. Indeed, there was not time to make great preparations; nor did Squire Cleverdon care for display, or, on this occasion, for expense. His one desire was to have it over, and Fox settled in his house, for his affairs were causing him the utmost alarm—they were gathering to a crisis. It was with them but a matter of days; and, unless Fox were married to Bessie before the crisis arrived and became known, it was possible that the engagement, on which now all his hopes for the salvation of the property hung, might be broken off.

The license was obtained, and almost simultaneously came the grant from the Garter King of Arms, and Clarenceaux King of Arms, "of the South, East, and *West parts of* England, from the River Trent south-

wards," to the effect that "whereas His Majesty, by warrant under his Royal Signet and Sign Manual, had signified to the Most Noble the Earl Marshal that he had been graciously pleased to give and to grant unto Anthony Crymes, Gent., son and heir apparent to Fernando Crymes, Esquire, the license to bear henceforth the arms and name of Cleverdon, in lieu of that of Crymes, that therefore a patent to this effect was issued, &c." Consequently, Anthony Crymes was married, not in his paternal name, but in that which he had acquired.

The day was grey and sunless, with a raw north-east wind blowing.

Bessie returned, after the marriage, to the house where she had been born, and Fox came with her. She went to her old room, and there laid aside her wedding-dress, and then came quietly down the stairs into her father's chamber, where she patiently awaited him.

The old man had been giving orders without, and she heard his voice in the passage. She had not long to wait before he came in.

He looked at her with lifted eyebrows, and took off his hat, and asked what she wanted there.

"One word with you, dear father," said she, gently.

"Very well; make haste—I am busy. There is much to see to-day. Where is Fox?"

He threw himself into his armchair, and crossed his feet.

"Father," said Bessie, "I have done what you desired, and with this day a new life begins with me. I

have come to ask your pardon for any grief, annoyance, or trouble I may have at any time caused you. I also ask you to forgive me for having opposed your wishes at first when you wanted me to marry Fox. I did not then understand your reasons. But it has been a hard thing for me to submit. I dare say, dear father, you can have no idea how hard it has been for me. Now I have sworn to love Fox, and I will try my best to do so."

"Oh, love! love!" said the old man; "that is a mere word. You will get accustomed to each other, as I am to this chair."

"That may be. And yet—there is love—love that is more than a word. I suppose you loved my mother."

The old man made a deprecatory motion with his hand.

"Oh! father, without love in the house, how sad life is! I ought to know that, for I have had but little love shown me by you. Do not think I reproach you," she said, hastily, a little colour mounting into her pale face; "but I have felt the want of what, perhaps, I was not worthy to receive."

"Come—come!" said the old man; "I have no time for such talk that leads to nothing."

"But it must lead to something," urged Bessie; "for that very reason have I come here. You know, my dear father, that you made me a promise when I gave my consent, and I come now to remind you of it."

"I made no promise," said the old man impatiently.

"Indeed, father, you did; and on the strength of that promise I found the force to conquer my own *heart, and* make the sacrifice you required of me."

"Oh, sacrifice! sacrifice!" sneered Squire Cleverdon. "I have been a cruel father, to be sure; I have required you to offer yourself up as a victim! Pshaw! You keep your home—it becomes doubly yours—you get a husband, and retain your own name of Cleverdon. What more do you require? It is a sacrifice to become heiress of Hall! Good faith! Your brother would give his ears for such a sacrifice as this. Go and get ready for the guests."

"I cannot go from you, father," answered Elizabeth, with gentleness, and yet, withal, with firmness. "I should be doing an injustice to myself, to my brother, and to you, were I not now to speak out. There was a compact made between us. I promised to take him whom you had determined on for me because it was your wish, and because it was necessary for the saving of the estate. I suppose Fox made it a condition. He would not help you out of your difficulties unless I gave him my hand."

"Fox knows nothing about them."

"What!" Bessie turned the colour of chalk. "Father! you do not mean what you say? He has been told all. He is aware that the mortgage has been called in, and must be paid."

The old man fidgetted in his chair; he could not look his daughter in the face. He growled forth,

"You wenches! what do you understand of business —of money concerns—mortgages, and the like? Say what you have to say and begone, but leave these money-matters on one side.

"I cannot, father," exclaimed Bessie, with fluttering

heart; "I cannot, indeed, father. Is it so that Fox has been drawn on to take me without any knowledge of how matters stand with regard to the property?"

"All properties are burdened more or less with debts. He knows that. He does not keep his wits in his pocket. I have told him nothing, but he must know that there are mortgages. Show me the estate without them. But there, I will not speak of this matter with you; if you will not leave the room, I shall." He half rose in his seat.

"Very well, father, no more of that now. Time will show whether he was aware of, or suspected the condition Hall is in; and I trust that he may not then have to reproach you or me. That is not what I desired to speak of when I came here. I came about Anthony."

"I know but one Anthony Cleverdon, and he is your husband."

"I came in behalf of my brother and your very flesh and blood, which Fox is not. Father, you must —you must indeed suffer me to pour out my heart before you."

He growled and turned uneasily in his chair, and began to scrape the floor with his heel. His brows were knit, and his lips close set.

"Father," said Bessie, with her clear, steady eyes on him, "you speak of love as empty air, but it is not so. What but love induced me to submit myself to your will? I love you. To me Hall is nothing; a cottage with love in it, where I might sit at your feet *and kiss your* hand, were a thousand times dearer to

me than this new cold house, where all is hard and love does not settle to live." She drew a long breath. "I love you, therefore I have bowed myself before you; and I love Anthony, and for his sake I have made the greatest sacrifice any mortal can make. I have given my life up to another whom as yet I can neither love nor respect, that I might by so doing obtain from you pardon for my brother."

"A fine pattern of love Anthony has shown!"

"Father, there is great sorrow and sickness in his house, and he is far away, venturing his life for a cause that he thinks right. He may never return. His babe is dead, his wife ill. See what misery there is hanging over him! Nothing but my love for my brother, my desire to see him again in your arms, has kept me here. When I was plagued about Fox—that is to say, when I first heard about him as seeking me—I had resolved never to marry him, and rather than marry him, I would have run away to Anthony; he would have taken me in. But I thought of you alone in this house, deserted by both your children, and I thought that by staying here I might do something for Anthony, find a proper time for speaking in his favour, and so I stayed; and then, father, when you told me in what peril the property stood, when I saw what agony of mind was yours, when I thought that with the break down of the whole ambition of your life, your grey hairs would certainly be bowed to the dust—then I conquered myself and gave up my will to yours. There is love that is more than a mere word, it is a mighty force, and oh! father, I would that you knew more of it! Father, you

—your own self—have suffered most of all through your lack of love. I have seen how the consequences of your harshness towards Anthony have fallen on you, and you have suffered. I dare say you may have loved him, but I think, as you say love is nought but a word, that you can have had only pride in him, and not love —for love suffereth long and is kind. He rebelled against you because you showed him pride—not love. He offended your ambition because you had set your heart on his taking Julian and winning with her Kilworthy; he embittered your heart because he married the daughter of a man that was your enemy. What has been wounded in you has been ambition, not love. Well, Anthony has done wrong. He ought to have considered you. He has ill repaid you all that you lavished upon him from infancy. But, father, if you had given him love, instead of setting your ambition on him, it would not have been so light a matter for him to resist your will. I feel his conduct more than do you. It is because of him that I have married Fox. I have loved and cared for him since he was an infant, as though I were his mother as well as his sister. I promised my mother and his to be his guardian angel, and I have been what I could to him, and now, dutiful to my promise to her and my love of him, and my desire for your own happiness, I have given up myself. So now, father, accept the sacrifice I have made, and forgive Anthony his inconsiderate offence against you."

The old man felt rather than saw that she was near*ing him, with* extended hands, with tearful eyes fixed

entreatingly on him. He thought how he had almost gone on his knees to her to obtain her consent to marry Fox, and he was ashamed of his temporary weakness, the outcome of his distress; now he thought he must compensate for this weakness by obstinate perseverance in his old course.

"Now Bess," said he roughly, "no more of this. What I did promise that I will keep. I did not undertake to forgive Anthony. I never—no not for one instant—gave way to your intercession for that girl—that Urith. Her I will never forgive!"

"What, father! Not if she dies?"

"No, never! not if she dies!"

"Then how can you expect forgiveness for your transgressions? Father, consider that it was not her will to marry Anthony. It was his. You taught him to be headstrong, self-willed, imperious. You taught him to deny himself nothing that he wished. He acted on the teaching you gave, and yourself is answerable for the result."

The old man drew back in his armchair and clenched his hands on the arms of the seat, so that the tendons stood out as taut strings, and the dark veins were puffed with blood.

"Father! You have now a son-in-law, taking the place in the house that should have been—that was—Anthony's. He takes his place, occupies his seat, wears his very name. Compare the two. Which is the most worthy representative of the Cleverdons, of whom you are so proud? Which is the finest man—the tall, strong, splendidly-built Tony, your own son, with his handsome

face and honest eyes, or this other Anthony—this Fox who has stolen into his lair? Which is the better in heart? Tony, with all his faults, has a thousand good qualities. He has been vain, self-willed, and self-indulgent, but all this came on him from outside; you and I and all who had to do with him, nurtured these evil qualities. But in his inner heart he is sound, and true, and good. What is Fox? What good do we know of Fox? Will anything make of him a generous and open-hearted man?"

It seemed to Bessie as though the hands of her father that clenched the chair-arms were trembling. He moved his fingers restlessly; and for a moment she caught his eye, and thought she saw in it a tenderer look. She threw her arms about him, and, stooping, kissed the backs of his hands. It was the first time she had dared to kiss him. He thrust her from him.

"Pshaw!" said he. "Do you suppose I am to be cajoled against my judgment?"

"Is that all you have to say?" asked Bessie, drawing back. "No, father, you shall not put me off. I will not be put off. I have won a right to insist on what I ask being heard and granted."

"Indeed!" He looked up at her with recovered hardness in his eye, and with his hands nerved to the same icy grip. "Indeed! You have acquired a right over me?"

"I have, father. I will be heard!"

"Very well; I hold to what I promised. Perhaps," he laughed bitterly, "perhaps I may think of the pos*sibility of* Anthony obtaining my forgiveness. Yes,"

said he, as a sudden access of better feeling rushed over him, as in his mind's eye the form of his handsome son rose up before him, "yes, let him come to me as the prodigal son, and speak like the prodigal, and desert his swine-husks, and then I will kill the fatted calf and bring forth the ring."

Still the same. He could see no fault in himself—no error in his treatment of his son.

Bessie would have answered, but that the door was thrust open, and in came Fox, agitated, angry, alarmed.

"What is the meaning of this?" he shouted, addressing the Squire, regardless of the presence of Bessie. "What is this about? Here is that fellow—that man from Exeter—here again at the door, with two others —and——"

"And what?"

"He says they are bailiffs, come to take possession."

"What! to-day! Then, son-in-law, you must pay them off. I cannot. Save Hall for yourself."

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE PIGEON-COTE.

"WHAT is the meaning of this?" asked Fox. "Are these wedding-guests, invited to help to make merry?"

Old Cleverdon looked at Fox, then at the door, in which, behind his son-in-law, entered the stranger from Exeter.

"This is Master French," said the Squire.

"I do not care what be his name; but what his business?" said Fox, rudely. "Come in, Master French, and let us have this load winnowed. You had better go." The last words were addressed to Bessie.

"This is what I have come about," said the stranger, entering. "The bill for fore-closure has been filed; and, unless the mortgage-money be paid within fourteen days, then, Master Cleverdon, you stand absolutely debarred and precluded from all rights, title, suit, and equity of redemption in or to the premises, which thenceforth become the absolute property of the mortgagee."

"And this," exclaimed Fox—"this is the meaning of my being constituted heir to Hall! Come, Squire, you must take me into council; for, please to know that now you have hooked me into your family and house, I must eat off the same trencher as you. You don't suppose I married Bess for her beauty, do you? What have you there?"

The old man had gone to his desk, and unlocked it.

Fox pressed after him, put his hand on his shoulder, and thrust him aside. "Let me see your accounts, your mortgages, and whatever you have besides stuffed into that cabinet of mysteries."

"Is there no means of raising the requisite money?" asked French. "Times are bad; but—still money is to be had somewhere. You must have friends and relatives who can help."

"Relatives—none," said the old man. "Friends—*I have but Justice* Crymes."

"And he is away," said Fox, looking over his shoulder.

"Away, putting his head into a noose."

"You have a fortnight," said French. "I was sorry for you, but—I must perform my duty. If in a fortnight the sum be forthcoming—"

"A pretty sum it is!" shouted Fox, who had got hold of the mortgage. "And this is what my father is to be cajoled into finding. That is the meaning of all the hurry and scramble of the marriage."

"I have debts due to me, but I cannot get the money in—in time," said old Cleverdon.

"If not in time, then as well never," said Fox. "Come, you French, tell me all about it."

The stranger—an attorney from Exeter—looked at Mr. Cleverdon, who nodded his head. He knew that eventually the whole matter must be made known to his son-in-law, but he had not reckoned on it coming to a crisis so soon.

Mr. French plainly stated all the circumstances. A large sum had been borrowed on the property some years ago when purchased by Anthony Cleverdon, the elder, and this sum had been called in. His client, the mortgagee, was dead, and the executors were resolved, obliged, in fact, to realize the estate, and could not be put off. Mr. Cleverdon had been given due notice, and had neglected to attend to it; the mortgage-money had not been paid, consequently a bill had been filed in Chancery, and unless the entire sum were forthcoming within fourteen days, the Cleverdons

would have to leave the place, which would pass over to the executors, who would sell it.

Fox followed what was said with close attention, and without interruption. The only token of his feelings was the contraction and twitching of his hard sandy eyelashes. When Mr. French ceased speaking, he laughed aloud, hoarsely and hysterically, and became deadly white. His eyes turned to old Cleverdon, and with lips curled and livid over his teeth he looked at him in speechless rage for some minutes. He was like a mean and angry beast, driven to bay, and watching his opportunity to fly out and bite.

Then all at once, with a voice half in a scream, half-choked, he poured forth reproaches on the Squire.

"By heaven! I did suppose that no one could get the better of me; but I had not reckoned on the craft of an old country farmer, in whom sharp dealing has gone down from father to son, and roguery has been an heritage never parted with, never diminished, always bettered with each generation. And I have had to take this scurvy name of Cleverdon so as to involve me in the disgrace of the family, and mated with it to a maid with an ugly face and no wit—all to get me entangled so that I must with my own hands pull the Cleverdons—the Cleverdons," he sneered and spat on the floor, "pull with my hands these Cleverdons out of the ditch into which they have tumbled, or lie down and be swallowed up in the mire with them. I will not do it. I will neither help you nor go into the dirt with you. I will leave you to yourselves, and laugh till my sides crack *when you are* turned out of the house. Where will

you go—you and your beggarly daughter? Shall I see if there be room in the poorhouse at Peter Tavy? Listen!" he screamed, and turned to the attorney, "Listen to what this man, this old grey-haired rascal has done. He comes of a breed of sheep-dealers, accustomed to get a wether between the knees and shear her; got horny hands from the plough tail, boots that smell of the stables, arms accustomed to heave the dung-fork—this is what they have been, and he goes and buys Hall with other folks' money, and buys himself a coat of arms with other folks' money, and builds a mansion in place of his old tumble-about-the-ears farmhouse with other folks' money, and puts what money he will into the hands of that brag and bombast talker, his son, to humble and insult the young gentles of good blood and name—and, mark you, it is other folks' money—and then—then he offers to make me his heir if I will take his daughter, whom no one else will look at and give a thank-you for, and assume his name—his name that reeks of the stable-yard. When I do so, then I find I am heir to nothing but beggary!" He shrieked with rage, and held out his hands threateningly at the old man.

The Squire became at first purple with rage; he rose from his seat slowly. His eyes glittered like steel. He was not the man to be spoken to in this manner, to be insulted in himself and his family! His hand clenched. Old though he was, his sinews were tough and his hands were heavy.

Fox came at him with head down between his

shoulders, his sharp chin extended, his hands like the claws of a hawk catching in air.

The attorney stepped between them, or father and son-in-law would have done each other an injury. He laid hold of Fox by the shoulder and thrust him back, and bade him cease from profitless abuse of an unfortunate man, who was, moreover, his father, and to collect his thoughts, consider the situation, and decide whether he and his father would find the money and save Hall.

"Find the money!" said Fox. "Do you not hear that my father is away on a fool's errand, gone to join the rebels; was taking them money, several hundreds of pounds, when he was robbed by the way." He burst into harsh, hysterical laughter once more, "My father will not be home for a fortnight if he does come home at all. How am I to find the money? Kilworthy is not mine. It belongs to my sister."

"Cannot your sister assist you?"

"She would not if she could, but she can touch nothing, it is held in trust, and my father is trustee. Let Hall go, and the Cleverdons along with it. What care I?"

"You are now yourself a Cleverdon," retorted the Squire.

"By Heavens!" gasped Fox, "that I—that I should be outwitted, and by you!" Then he swung through the door and disappeared.

The old man remained standing with clenched hands for some minutes. The sweat had broken out on his brow, his grey hair, smoothed for the wedding cere-

mony, had bristled with rage and shame, and become entangled and knotted on his head. If it had not been for the convulsive twitching of the corners of the mouth, he might have been supposed a statue.

Presently he put his hands down on the arms of his chair, and slowly let himself sink into the seat. The colour died out of his cheeks and from his brow, and he became ashen in hue. His hands rested on the chair arms, motionless. His lips moved as though he were speaking to himself; and he was so—he was repeating the insolent words—the words wounding to his pride, to his honour, that had been shot at him from the envenomed heart of Fox; and these hurt him more than the thoughts of the disaster that menaced.

"Do not be overcome by his spite," said French. "He is disappointed, and his disappointment has made him speak words he will regret. He must and will help you. My clients would not deal harshly with you —they respect you, but are forced to act. They do not want your estate but their money—that they are compelled to call together. If this young gentleman be your son-in-law and heir, it is his interest to save the property, and he will do it if he can. His father can be found in a couple of days, and when found can be induced to lend the money, if he has the means at his disposal. Perhaps in a week all will be right."

Squire Cleverdon did not speak.

"And now," said French, "with your consent I will refresh myself, and leave you to your own thoughts. It is a pity that you did not take steps earlier to save yourself."

"I could not—I could not. I was ashamed to ask of any one. I thought, that is, I never thought the demand was serious."

Fox had gone forth to the stable to saddle a horse; finding no one about in the yard, he seated himself on the corn-box, and remained lost in thought, biting his nails. All the men connected with the farm were in the kitchen having cake and ale, and drinking the health of the bride heartily, and secretly confusion to the bridegroom, whom they detested, both for his own character, which was pretty generally judged, and also, especially, because he had stepped into the place and name of their beloved young Anthony, who, though he had tyrannized over them, was looked up to, and liked by all.

All was silent in the stable save for the stamp occasionally of a horsehoof and the rattle of the halters at the mangers. Bessie's grey was nearest to Fox, and the beast occasionally turned her head and looked at him out of her clear, gentle eyes.

Fox put his sharp elbows on his knees, and drove his fingers through his thin red hair. He was in a dilemma. He was married to Bessie, and adopted into the family. As the old man had said to him, he was now a Cleverdon. It had cost him a large sum to obtain this privilege, and he could not resume his patronymic without the cost of a fresh grant from the College of Arms. Moreover, that would not free him from his alliance.

Nothing, perhaps, so galled the thoughts of Fox as the consciousness that he had been over-reached—he

who had deemed himself incomparably the shrewdest and keenest man in the district; who had despised and laughed at old Cleverdon—never more than when luring him on with the hopes of winning Julian. He had done this out of pure malice, with the desire of making the old man ridiculous, and of enjoying the disappointment that was inevitable. He had played his trick upon his father-in-law; but tables had been turned on him in compound degree.

His father-in-law was right—he was a Cleverdon, and his fortunes were bound up with Hall. If Hall were lost, he had lost all but the trifle he was likely to receive from his father. If Hall was to be saved, it must be saved by him; and, had he known that it was likely to be sold, he would never have encumbered himself with a wife—with Bessie—and degraded himself to take the name of Cleverdon instead of his own ancient and honourable patronymic. He would have waited a fortnight; and, if he could get the money together, would have bought Hall, and enjoyed the satisfaction of turning the Cleverdons out of it.

It was now too late. He must decide on his course of conduct. He did not think of doing what Mr. French supposed he would—ride in quest of his father. He would not venture himself near the quarters of Monmouth, and run the risk of being supposed to have any sympathy or connection with the rebellion. Moreover, he very much doubted whether his father could, if he would, assist in this matter.

Presently he stood up, went to the grey, saddled her, and rode to Kilworthy.

On reaching that place he put up the horse himself, and stole up the steps to the first terrace, on which grew a range of century-old yews, passed behind the yews to the end of the terrace, where was an abandoned pigeon-house, a circular stone building, with conical roof. The door was open, and Fox went in it. The wooden door had long disappeared, for the pigeon-house had been given up. Within were holes in tiers all round the building, in which pigeons had formerly built and laid. But the owls and rats had so repeatedly and determinedly invaded the house, and had wrought such havoc among the pigeons, that at last it had been abandoned wholly, and the pigeons were accommodated in the adjoining farmyard, on casks erected on the top of poles, where, if not out of reach of owls, they were secure from rats. The neglected pigeonry was too strongly built to fall to ruin, but the woodwork was rotted away, and had not been replaced. It was a dark chamber, receiving its light from the door, and was not used for any purpose.

Into this, after looking about him cautiously, Fox entered. A short ladder was laid against the wall, and this he took, and after carefully counting the pigeon-holes, set the ladder, and after ascending it, thrust his hand into one of the old resting-places and drew out a canvas bag. It had been sealed, but the seal was broken. It had been opened and then tied up again. Then Fox went to the next pigeon-hole, and felt in that, and again drew forth a bag similar to the first.

"Here is the money," muttered he. "Enough to save *Hall, but whether* I shall risk doing it is another matter."

Suddenly the place was darkened—the light entering by the door was intercepted.

"Fox's heart stood still. For a moment only he was in darkness. He fell rather than climbed down the ladder, hastily put it back where he found it, and ran outside.

At the further end of the terrace was Julian. As he caught sight of her he attempted to withdraw, but she had seen him, and she beckoned, and came to him with quick steps.

"Why, Fox! you here!—and you were married but an hour or two agone! Why here? Why not at the side of Bessie at table answering the toasts?"

"Where have you come from?" retorted Fox, uneasily.

"Nay! that is for me to ask. I have but just come to walk up and down for air, and you—you spring out of the earth. What has brought you back? Quarrelled already with your bride?"

"I have returned for you, Julian. Bess is pained and aggrieved that you have not come to Hall to be with her. She has none as a friend but you."

"What! you have come after me?"

"For what else should I come?"

"Nay," laughed Julian; "who can sound thy dark and deep thoughts, and thread thy crooked mind? I cannot believe it."

"I have ridden Bess's own mare."

"That may be. And you came here to fetch me? And for that only?"

"I did."

"I won't go." Julian looked at Fox with twinkling eyes. "Oh, Fox! I do love and pity Bess too greatly to bear to see her at thy side. So—you came for me? You came out here on the terrace after me?"

"I have told you so. How long have you been here?"

"But this minute. I took one walk as far as the old pigeon-house and back, and then—saw you. Did you come up the other way? From the yard?"

"I did."

"Oh! I will not go with you. Return to Bess. Tell her I love her and wish her well, but I cannot see her; I cannot now, I love her too well. Get thee gone, Fox."

CHAPTER L.

ANOTHER FLIGHT.

THE day was drawing to its decline before Fox returned to Hall. He had been alarmed at having been seen by his sister in the dove-cote, and he tried by craft to extract from her whether she had observed what he had been doing in it. He hung about Kilworthy for several hours, uncertain what course to pursue. He could draw nothing from Julian to feed his alarm, and he persuaded, or tried to persuade, himself that she had no suspicions that he had been in the dove-cote; then he considered what he had best do with the money-bags concealed there. He could remove them only

at night, and if he removed them, where should he hide them? No more effectual place of concealment could well be imagined than the pigeon-house with its many lockers, the depths of which could not be probed by the eye from below, and only searched by the hand from a ladder. He puzzled his brain to find some other place, but his ingenuity failed him. He was angry with Julian for having come on the terrace at the inopportune moment when he was in the pigeon-house, and he was angry with himself for having gone there in daylight.

He asked, was it probable that Julian, had she suspected anything, would not at once have assailed him with inquiries wherefore he had gone to that deserted structure; and what he was doing within it, on the ladder. It would be unlike her not immediately to take advantage of an occasion either against him, or of perplexity to him, and he almost satisfied himself that she had believed his account, and was void of suspicion that there was concealment behind it. Even if she did suspect and search the lockers of the pigeon-cote, he must know it. He would find she had been there, and he deemed it advisable not to disturb his arrangement, but leave the money hidden there till he was given fresh cause for uneasiness relative to its safety, at all events for a few days, till he could discover another and more secret place for stowing it away.

He remained for some hours, lurking about and watching; for he argued that, if Julian entertained any thought that he had been in the dove-cote on private ends, like a woman she would take the earliest occasion

of trying to discover his ends, and would go, as soon as she thought she was unobserved, to the place and explore its lockers.

But though he kept himself hidden, and narrowly watched her proceedings, he could find no cause for mistrust. She left the terrace and went off to the stables to see her horse; she ordered it out for a ride; then, as rain began to fall, she countermanded it; then she went to the parlour, where she wrote a letter to her father to give him an account of the marriage of his son, and to express her views thereon.

Finding her thus engaged, and with his mistrust laid at rest, Fox left Kilworthy and went to Tavistock, where he entered a tavern and called for wine. He had not resolved what to do about the mortgage-money on Hall.

He believed that, with the five hundred pounds stowed away in the pigeon-holes at Kilworthy, and with what money old Cleverdon was able to raise, sufficient, or almost sufficient, could be paid to secure Hall. If more had to be found, it could perhaps be borrowed on the security of the small Crymes' estate in Buckland; but Fox was most averse to having his own inheritance charged for this purpose. If Hall were let slip, then he was left with nothing save his five hundred pounds and the small Buckland property.

He sat in the tavern for long, drinking, and trying to reach a solution of his difficulty, consumed with burning wrath at the manner in which he had been imposed upon, and entangled in the embarrassments *of a family* into which he had pushed his way,

believing that by so doing he was entering into a rich heritage.

When he reached Hall, at nightfall, he had drunk so much, and was in such an inflamed and exasperated frame of mind, as to promise trouble.

Bess saw the condition he was in the moment he entered the door, and she endeavoured to turn him aside from her father's room towards which he was making his way, unsteadily.

The serving-men and maids were about, and a few guests. Comments, unfavourable to Fox, had passed with some freedom, and not inaudibly, relative to his absence on that afternoon. No one desired his presence, and yet the fact of his being away provoked displeasure. It was taken as an insult to those present. That some trouble had fallen on Squire Cleverdon, that his position in Hall was menaced, was generally known and commented on in the house, by guests and servants alike. That Fox had left in connection with this difficulty was admitted, but nevertheless not excused.

French was there disposed to make himself merry, with a fund of good stories to scatter among the guests. When Fox appeared, all present, guests and servants, were in jovial mood, having eaten and drunken to their hearts' satisfaction; some were in the passage, some in the dining-room that opened out of it, with the door open. Mr. Cleverdon was with the guests, and when he beheld his son-in-law in the entrance, he started up and came towards him. Fox saw him at once, and hissed, caught at the side-posts of the door with his left, and pointed jeeringly at the Squire.

"I want to have a talk with you, my plump money-bag, my well-acred Squire father-in-law, and if there are others by, so much the better. It is well that all the world should see the bubble burst. Ha! ha! ha! This is the man who was a little farmer, and pushed himself to become a justice! The little shrivelled toad who would blow himself out to be like an ox. His sides are cracking, mark you!"

"Take him away," said the old man, "he is drunk."

"Go—I pray you go!" pleaded Bessie. "Prithee, respect him, at least in public, look at his grey hairs, consider the trouble he is in."

"His grey hairs!" retorted Fox. "Why should I respect them? They have grown grey in rascality. So many years of sandy locks, so much roguery, so many more with grey hair, double the amount of roguery. Why should I respect an old rogue? I would kick and thrash a young one out of the house. His trouble—forsooth! His trouble is naught to mine, hooked on to a disreputable, drowning family, and unable to strike out in their faces, and wrench their hands away, and let them swallow the brine and go down alone."

The Squire and the guests stood or sat spell-bound. What was to be done with the fellow? How could he be brought to silence? The stream of words of a drunken man is no easier stopped than is a spring by the hand laid against it.

"Ha! ha!" jeered Fox, still pointing at his father-in-law; "there is the man who has ruled so tyrannically in his house, who drove his son out-of-doors because he followed his own example and married empty pockets.

But his son did better than the father, he did take a girl with a few lumps of granite and a few shovelfuls of peat, but the father's own wife had nothing. What he suffered in himself he would not suffer in his son."

The old man, shaking with rage as with the palsy, and deadly white, turned to the servants, and called to them to take away the fellow.

"Take me away!" screamed Fox. "Take and shake me, and see if there be any gold in my pockets that will fall out, and which he may pick up. I tell you I am rich; I have the money all ready, I could produce that in an hour, which would save Hall, and send that fellow there, the lawyer, and his men back to Exeter to-night, if they cared to go over Black Down in the dark, where robbery is committed and coaches stopped and plundered. I have the gold all ready, but do not fancy I will give one guinea to help a Cleverdon. I hate them all—father, daughter, and son; I curse the whole tribe, I dance on their heads, I trample on their hearts, I scorn them. They hold out their hands to me, but I will not pick them up."

Bessie put her arms about him, and, with eyes that were full of tears, and face blanched with shame, entreated him to go, to control himself, to remember that this old man that he insulted was his father-in-law, and that, for better, for worse, in riches or poverty, he was her husband.

"I am not like to forget that," hissed Fox. "Oh, troth, no! Linked to thee—to thee, with thy ugly face and empty purse; thee, whom no one else would have, who has been hawked about and refused by all, and I

am to be coupled to thee all my life. Fore heaven I am not like to forget that."

This, addressed to Bessie, whom every servant in the house loved, and every guest who knew her respected, passed all bounds of endurance.

An angry roar rose from the men and maids who had crowded into the entrance-hall from the kitchen, from the courtyard, from the stables. The guests shouted out in their indignation, and a blow was aimed at Fox from a groom behind, that knocked him over, and sent him down on his knees into the dining-room. He was not seriously hurt—not deprived of his senses—but other blows would have followed from the incensed servants had not Bessie thrown herself in the way to protect him.

"Take him up—throw him into the horsepond!"

"Get a bramble, and thrash him with it till he is painted red."

"Cast him in with the pigs."

Such were the shouts of the servants, and, but for the interposition of Bessie, serious results would have followed. She gave Fox her hand, and, leaning on her shoulder, he was able to stagger to his feet. The blow he had received had driven the final remains of caution he had about him from his brain; he glared around in savage rage, with his teeth showing, and his short red hair standing up on his head like the comb of an angry cock.

"Who touched me? Bring him forth, that I may strike him." He drew his hunting-knife, and turned

from side to side. "Ah! let him come near, and I will score him as I did Anthony Cleverdon."

Bessie uttered a cry and drew back.

Fox looked at her, and, encouraged by her terror and pain, proceeded. "It is true, I did. We had a quarrel and drew swords, and I pinked him."

"A lie!" shouted one present. "Thou wearest no sword."

Fox turned sharply round, and snarled at the speaker. "I have not a bodkin—a skewer—but I have what is better—a carving-knife; and with that I struck him just above the heart. He fell, and ran, ran, ran"—his voice rose to a shriek—"he ran from me as a hare, full of fright, lest I should go after him and strike him again, between the shoulder-blades. Farmer Cleverdon! Gaffer Cleverdon! Thou hast a fool for a son—that all the world knows—and a knave as well, and add to that—a coward."

He stopped to laugh. Then, pointing with his knife at his father-in-law, he said:

"They say that he has gone to join the rebels. It is false. He is too great a coward to adventure himself there, and add to that I have cut too deep and let out too much white blood. He is skulking somewhere to be healed or to die."

Bessie had staggered back against the wall. She held her hands before her mouth to arrest the cries of distress that could barely be controlled. The old man had become white and rigid as a corpse.

"I would he were with the rebels. I hope he will be so healed, and that speedily, that he may join them,

and then he will be taken and hung as a traitor. I' faith, I would like to be there! I would give a bag of gold to be there—to see Anthony Cleverdon hung. I'd sit down on the next stone and eat my bread and cheese, and throw the crusts and the rinds in his face as he hung.—The traitor!"

An hour later there came a tap at the door of Willsworthy. Uncle Sol opened, and Bessie Cleverdon entered, pale.

She asked to see her grandmother, Mistress Penwarne, who was still there.

"I am come," she said, "to relieve you. Go back to Luke, and I will tarry with Urith. Luke must need you, and I can take your place here. I will not lay my head under the roof of Hall whilst Fox is there. It is true that I promised this day to love and obey him, but I promised what I cannot perform. He has forfeited every right over me! Till he leaves Hall I remain here—— With Urith—both unhappy—maybe we shall understand each other. My poor father! My poor father! I cannot remain with him whilst Fox is there!"

CHAPTER LI.

ON THE CLEAVE AGAIN.

EVER full of pity and love for others, and forgetfulness of herself, Bessie sat holding Urith's hand in her own, with her eyes fixed compassionately on her sister-*in-law*.

Urith's condition was perplexing. It was hard to say whether the events of that night when she saw Anthony struck down on the hearthstone, and her subsequent and consequent illness, with the premature confinement and the death of the child, had deranged her faculties, or whether she was merely stunned by this succession of events.

Always with a tendency in her to moodiness, she had now lapsed into a condition of silent brooding. She would sit the whole day in one position, crouched with her elbows on her knees, and her chin in her hands, looking fixedly before her, and saying nothing; taking no notice of anything said or done near her.

It almost seemed as though she had fallen into a condition of melancholy madness, and yet, when spoken to, she would answer, and answer intelligently. Her faculties were present, unimpaired, but crushed under the overwhelming weight of the past. Only on one point did she manifest any signs of hallucination. She believed that Anthony was dead, and nothing that was said to her could induce her to change her conviction. She believed that every one was in league to deceive her on this point.

And yet, though sane, she had to be watched, for in her absence of mind and internal fever of distress, she would put her hands into her mouth, and bite the knuckles, apparently unconscious of pain.

Mistress Penwarne, who was usually with her, would quietly remove her hands from her mouth, and hold them down. Then Urith would look at her with a strange, questioning expression, release her hands, and

resting the elbows on her knees, thrust the fingers into her hair.

The state in which Urith was alarmed Bessie. She tried in vain to cheer her; every effort, and they were various in kind, failed. The condition of Urith resembled that of one oppressed with sleep before consciousness passes away. When her attention was called by a question addressed to her pointedly by name, or by a touch, she answered, but she relapsed immediately into her former state. She could be roused to no interest in anything. Bessie spoke to her about domestic matters, about the rebellion of the Duke of Monmouth, about the departure of Mr. Crymes, finally, after some hesitation, about her own marriage, but she said nothing concerning the conduct of Fox on the preceding evening, or of her desertion of the home of her childhood. Urith listened dreamily, and forgot at once what had been told her. Her mind was susceptible to no impressions, so deeply indented was it with her own sorrows.

Luke, so said Mistress Penwarne, had been to see her, and had spoken of sacred matters; but Urith had replied to him that she had killed Anthony, that she did not regret having done so, and that therefore she could neither hope in nor pray to God.

This Mistress Penwarne told Bessie, standing over Urith, well aware that what she said passed unheeded by the latter, probably unheard by her. Nothing but a direct appeal could force Urith to turn the current of her thoughts, and that only momentarily, from the *direction they* had taken.

"She has been biting her hands again," said Mistress Penwarne. "Bessie, when she does that, pull out the token that hangs on her bosom and put it into her palm. She will sit and look at that by the hour. She must be broken of that trick."

Urith slowly stood up, with a ruffle of uneasiness on her dull face. She was conscious that she was being discussed, without exactly knowing what was said about her. Without a word of explanation, she went out, drawing Bessie with her, who would not let go her hand; and together, in silence, they passed through the court and into the lane.

Their heads were uncovered, the wind was fresh, and the sun shone brightly.

Urith walked leisurely along the lane, accompanied by Bessie Cleverdon, between the moorstone walls, thick-bedded with pink and white flowering saxifrage, and plumed with crimson foxgloves. She looked neither to right nor to left till she reached the moor-gate closing the lane, a gate set there to prevent the escape of the cattle from their upland pasturage. The gate was swung between two blocks of granite, in which sockets had been cut for the pivot of the gate to swing. Urith put forth her hand, thrust open the gate, and went on. It was characteristic of her condition that she threw it open only wide enough to allow herself to pass through, and Bess had to put forth her disengaged hand to check the gate from swinging back upon her. This was not due to rudeness on the part of Urith, but to the fact that Urith had forgotten that any one was with her.

On issuing forth on the open waste-land among the flowering heather and deep carmine, large-belled heath, the freedom, the fresher air seemed to revive Urith. A flicker of light passed over her darkened face, as though clouds had been lifted from a tor, and a little watery sunlight had played over its bleak surface. She turned her head to the west, whence blew the wind, and the air raised and tossed her dark hair. She stood still, with half-closed eyes, and nostrils distended, inhaling the exhilarating breeze, and enjoying its coolness as it trifled with her disordered locks.

Bessie had tried her with every subject that could distract her thought, in vain. She now struck on that which nearly affected her.

"Urith," she said, "I have heard that a battle is expected every day, and Anthony is in it. You will pray God to guard him in danger, will you not?"

"Anthony is dead. I killed him."

"No, dear Urith, he is not dead; he has joined the Duke of Monmouth."

"They told you so? They deceived you. I killed him."

"It is not so." Bessie paused. Her hand clenched that of Urith tightly. "My dearest sister, it is not so. Fox himself told me, and told my father—*he* struck Anthony."

"I bade him do so—I had not strength in my arm, I had no knife. But I killed him."

"I assure you that this is not true."

"I saw him fall across the hearthstone. My mother *wished it.* She prayed that it might be so; with her

last breath; but she never prayed that I should kill him."

"Urith! Poor Anthony, who is dear to you and to me, is in extreme danger. There is like to be bloody fighting, and we must ask God to shield him."

"I cannot pray for him. He is dead, and I cannot pray at all. I am glad he is dead. I would do it all over again, rather than that Julian should have him."

"Julian!" sighed Elizabeth Cleverdon. "What has been told you about Julian?"

"She threatened to pluck him out of my bosom, and she has done it; but she shall not wear him in hers. I killed him because he was false to me, and would leave me."

"No—no—Urith, he never would leave you."

"He was going to leave me. His father asked him to go back to Hall."

"But he would not go. Anthony was too noble."

"He was going to desert me and go to Julian, so I killed him. They may kill me also; I do not care. God took my baby; I am glad He did that. I never wish for a moment it had lived—lived to know that its mother was a murderess. It could not touch my hand with his blood on it; so God took my baby. I am waiting; they will take me soon, because I killed Anthony. I am willing. I cannot pray. I have no hope. I wish it were over, and I were dead."

On her own topic, on that which engrossed all her mind, on that round which her thoughts turned incessantly, on that she could speak, and speak fairly ra-

tionally; and when she spoke her face became expressive.

They walked on together. Bessie knew not what to say. It was not possible to disturb Urith's conviction that her husband was dead, and that she was his destroyer.

They continued to walk, but now again in silence. Urith, again relapsed into her brooding mood, went forward, threaded her own way among the bunches of prickly gorse, now out of flower, and the scattered stones, regardless of Bessie, who was put to great inconvenience to keep at her side. She was forced to disengage her hand, as it was not possible for her to keep pace with her sister-in-law on such broken ground. Urith did not observe that Bessie had released her, nor that she was still accompanying her.

She took a direct course to Tavy Cleave, that rugged, natural fortress of granite which towers above the river that plunges into a gorge, rather than a valley, below.

On reaching this she cast herself down on the overhanging slab, whereon she had stood with Anthony, when he clasped her in his arms and swung her, laughing and shouting, over the abyss.

Bessie drew to her side. She was uneasy what Urith might do, in her disturbed frame of mind; but no thought of self-destruction seemed to have crossed Urith's brain. She swung her feet over the gulf, and put her hands through her hair, combing it out into the wind, and letting that waft and whirl it about, as *it blew up* the Cleave and rose against the granite

crags, as a wave that bowls against a rocky coast leaps up and curls over it.

Bessie allowed her to do as she liked. It was clearly a refreshment and relaxation to her heated and overstrained mind thus to sit and play with the wind.

Rooks were about, at one moment flashing white in the sun, then showing the blackness of their glossy feathers. Their nesting and rearing labours were over: they had deserted their usual haunts among trees to disport themselves on the waste lands.

The roar of the river came up on the wind from below—now loud as the surf on reefs at sea, then soft and soothing as a murmur of marketers returning from fairing, heard from far away.

Something—Bessie knew not what—induced her to turn her head aside, when, with a start of alarm, she saw, standing on a platform of rock, not a stone's throw distant, the tall, full form of Julian. Her face was turned towards her and Urith. She had been watching them. The sun was on her handsome, richly-coloured face, with its lustrous eyes and ripe, pouting lips.

Bessie's first impulse was to hold up her hand in caution. She did not know what the effect produced on Urith might be of seeing suddenly before her the rival who had blighted her happiness; and the position occupied by Urith was dangerous, on the overhanging ledge.

Bessie rose from her place and walked towards Julian, stepping cautiously among the crags. Urith took no notice of her departure.

On reaching Julian Crymes, Bessie caught her by

the arm and drew her back among the
sight and hearing of Urith.

"For heaven's sake," she entreated, "do not let her see you! Do you see what has fallen on her? She is not herself."

"Well," retorted Julian, "what of that? She and I staked for the same prize, and she has lost."

"And you have not won."

"I have won somewhat. He is no longer hers, if he be not mine."

"He is not, he never was, he never will be yours," said Bessie, vehemently. "Oh, Julian! how can you be so cruel, so wicked! Have you no pity? She is deranged. She thinks she has killed Anthony—dead; but you have seen—she cannot speak and think of anything now but of her sorrow and loss."

"We played together—it was a fair game. She wrested from me him who was mine by right, and she must take the consequences of her acts—we must all do that. I—yes—Bess, I am ready. I will take the consequences of what I have done. Let me pass, Bess I will speak to her."

"I pray you!" Bess extended her arms.

"No—let me pass. She and I are accustomed look each other in the face. I will see how she is will! Stand aside."

She had a long staff in her hand, and with i brushed Bess away, and strode past her, betwee and the precipice, with steady eye and firm step clambered to where was Urith.

She stood beside her for a minute, studyi

watching her, as she played with her hair, passing her fingers through it, and drawing it forth into the wind to turn, and curl, and waft about.

Then, her patience exhausted, Julian put forth the end of her staff, touched Urith, and called her by name.

Urith looked round at her, but neither spake nor stirred. No flush of anger or surprise appeared in her cheek, no lightning glare in her eye.

"Urith," said Julian, "how stands the game?"

"He is dead," answered Urith, "I killed him."

Julian was startled, and slightly turned colour.

"It is not true," she said hastily, recovering herself, "he has gone off to serve with the Duke of Monmouth."

"I killed him," answered Urith, composedly. "I would never, never let you have him, draw him from me. I am not sorry. I am glad. I killed him."

"What!" with a sudden exultation, "you know he would have been drawn away by me! I conquered."

"You did not get him away," said Urith, "you could not—for I killed him."

Julian put out her staff again and touched Urith.

"Listen to me!" she said, and there was triumph in her tone. "He never loved you. No, never. Me he loved; me he always had loved. But his father tried to force him, he quarrelled with him, and out of waywardness, to defy his father, to show his independence, he married you; but he never, never loved you."

"That is false," answered Urith, and she slowly rose on the platform to her feet. "That is false. He did love me. Here on this stone he held me to his heart, here he held me aloft and made me promise to be his very own."

"It was naught!" exclaimed Julian. "A passing fancy. Come—I know not whether he be alive or dead. Some say one thing and some another, but this I do know, that if he be alive, the world will be too narrow for you and me together in it, and if he be dead—it is indifferent to both whether we live, for to you and me alike is Anthony the sun that rules us, in whose light we have our joy. Come! Let us have another hitch, as the wrestlers say, and see which gives the other the turn."

Urith, in her half-dreamy condition, in rising to her feet, had taken hold of the end of Julian's staff, and now stood looking down the abyss to the tossing, thundering water, still holding the end.

"Urith!" called Julian, imperiously and impatiently, "dost' hear what I say? Let us have one more, and a final hitch. Thou holding the staff at one end, I at the other. See, we stand equal, on the same shelf, and each with a heel at the edge of the rock. One step back, and thou or I must go over and be broken on the stones, far below. Dost' mark me?"

"I hear what you say," answered Urith.

"I will thrust, and do thou! and see which can drive the other to death. In faith! we have thrust and girded at each other long, and driven each other to desperation. Now let us finish the weary game with a final turn [1] and a fair back." [1]

Urith remained, holding the end of the staff, look-

[1] Terms in wrestling. A "turn" is a fall; a "fair back" is *one where* the three points are touched—head, shoulders, and back.

ing at Julian steadily, without passion. Her face was pale; the wild hair was tossing about it.

"Art' ready!" called Julian. "When I say three, then the thrust begins, and one or other of us is driven out of one world into the other."

Urith let fall the end of the staff; "I have no more quarrel with you," she said, "Anthony is dead. I killed him."

Julian stamped angrily. "This is the second time thou hast refused my challenge; though thou didst refuse my glove, thou didst take it up. So now thou refusest, yet may be will still play. As thou wilt: at thine own time—but one or other."

She pointed down the chasm with her staff, and turned away.

CHAPTER LII.

THE SAWPIT.

At Hall, that same morning had broken on Squire Cleverdon in his office or sitting-room—it might bear either name—leaning back in his leathern armchair, with his hands clasped on his breast, his face an ashen grey, and his hair several degrees whiter than on the preceding day.

When the maid came in at an early hour to clean and tidy the apartment, she started, and uttered a cry of alarm, at the sight of the old man in his seat. She thought he was dead. But at her appearance he

stood up, and with tottering steps left the room and went upstairs. He had not been to bed all night.

Breakfast was made ready, and he was called; but he did not come.

That night had been one of vain thinking and torturing of his mind to find a mode of escape from his troubles. He had reckoned on assistance from Fox or his father, and this failed him. Fox, may be, for all his brag, could not help him. The Justice might, were he at home; but he had gone off to join the Duke of Monmouth, and, if he did return, it might be too late, and it was probable enough that he never would reappear. If anything happened to Mr. Crymes, then Fox would step into his place as trustee for Julian till Julian married; but could he raise money on her property to assist him and save his estate? Anyhow it was not possible for matters to be so settled that he could do this within a fortnight.

The only chance that old Cleverdon saw was to borrow money for a short term till something was settled at Kilworthy—till the Rebellion was either successful or was extinguished—and he could appeal to Fox or his father to secure Hall.

But to have, ultimately, to come to Fox for deliverance, to have his own fate and that of his beloved Hall in the hands of this son-in-law, who had insulted, humiliated him, publicly and brutally, the preceding night, was to drink the cup of degradation to its bitter and final dregs.

It was about ten o'clock when the old Squire, now *bent* and broken, with every line in his face deepened

to a furrow, reappeared, ready to go abroad. He had resolved to visit his attorney-at-law in Tavistock; and see if, through him, the requisite sum could be raised as a short loan.

The house was in confusion. None of the workmen were gone to their duties; the serving-maids and men talked or whispered in corners, and went about on tip-toe as though there were a corpse in the house.

His man told the Squire that Fox was gone, and had left a message, which the fellow would not deliver, so grossly insolent was it; the substance was that he would not return to the house. The Squire nodded, and asked for his horse.

After some delay it was brought to the door; the groom was not to be found, and one of the maids had gone to the stable for the beast, and had saddled and bridled it herself.

The old man mounted and rode away. Then he heard a call behind him, but did not turn his head; another call, but he disregarded it, and rode further, urging on his horse to a quicker rate.

Next moment the brute stumbled, and nearly went down on its nose; the Squire whipped angrily, and the horse went on faster, then began to lag, and suddenly tripped once more and fell. Old Cleverdon was thrown on the turf and was uninjured. He got up and went to the beast, and then saw why it had twice stumbled. The serving girl, in bridling it, had forgotten to remove the halter, the rope of which hung down to the ground, so that, as the animal trotted, the end got under the hoofs. That was what the call had signified.

Some one of the serving men had noticed the bridle over the halter as the old Squire rode away, and had shouted after him to that effect.

Mr. Cleverdon removed the bridle, then took off the halter, and replaced the bridle. What was to be done with the halter? He tried to thrust it into one of his pockets, but they were too small. He looked round; he was near a sawpit a bow-shot from the road. He remembered that he had ordered a couple of sawyers to be there that day to cut up into planks an oak tree; he hitched up his horse and went towards the sawpit, calling, but no one replied. The men had not come; they had heard of what had taken place at Hall, and had absented themselves, not expecting under the circumstances to be paid for their labour.

The old man wrapped the halter round his waist, and knotted it, then drew his cloak about him to conceal it, remounted, and rode on. Had the sawyers been at the pit he would have sent back the halter by one of them to the stable. As none was there, he was forced to take it about with him.

Five hours later he returned the same way. His eyes were glassy, and cold sweat beaded his brow. His breath came as a rattle from his lungs. All was over. He could obtain assistance nowhere. The times were dangerous, because unsettled, and no one would risk money till the public confidence was restored. His attorney had passed him on to the agent for the Earl of Bedford, and the agent had shaken his head, and suggested that the miller at the Abbey Mill was con-

sidered a well-to-do man, and might be inclined to lend money.

The miller refused, and spoke of a Jew in Bannawell, who was said to lend money at high rates of interest. The Jew, however, would not think of the loan, till the Rebellion was at an end.

All was over. The Squire—the Squire! he would be that no more—must leave the land and home of his fathers, his pride broken, his ambition frustrated, the object for which he had lived and schemed lost to him. There are in the world folk who are, in themselves, nothing, and who have nothing, and who nevertheless give themselves airs, and cannot be shaken out of their self-satisfaction. Mr. Cleverdon was not one of these, he had not their faculty of imagination. The basis of all his greatness was Hall; that was being plucked from under his feet; and he staggered to his fall. Once on the ground, he would be prostrate, lie there helpless, an object of mockery to those who had hitherto envied him. Once there, he would never raise his head again. He who had stood so high, who had been so imperious in his pride of place, would be under the feet of all those over whom hitherto he had ridden roughshod.

This thought gnawed and bored in him, with ever fresh anguish, producing ever fresh aspects of humiliation. This was the black spot on which his eyes were fixed, which overspread and darkened the whole prospect. The brutality with which he had been treated by Fox was but a sample and foretaste of the brutality with which he would be treated by all such as

hitherto he had held under, shown harshness and inconsideration towards. He had been selfish in his prosperity, he was selfish in his adversity. He did not think of Anthony. He gave not a thought to Bessie. His own disappointment, his own humiliation, were all that concerned him. He had valued the love of his children not a rush, and now that his material possessions slipped from his grasp, nothing was left him to which to cling.

He had ridden as far as the point where his horse had fallen, on his way back to Hall, when the rope twined about his waist loosened and fell down. The old man stooped towards his stirrup, picked it up, and cast it over his shoulder. The act startled his horse, and it bounded; with the leap the rope was again dislodged, and fell once more. He sought, still riding, to arrange the cord as it had been before about his waist, but found this impracticable.

He was forced to dismount, and then he hitched his horse to a tree, and proceeded to take the halter from his body, that he might fold and knot it together.

Whilst thus engaged, a thought entered his head that made him stand, with glazed eye, looking at the coil, motionless.

To what was he returning? To a home that was no more a home — to a few miserable days of saying farewell to scenes familiar to him from infancy; then to being cast forth on the world in his old age, he knew not whither to go, where to settle. To a new life for which he cared nothing, without interests, without ambitions—wholly purportless. He would go forth

alone; Bessie would not accompany him, for he had thrown her away on the most despicable of men, and to him she was bound—him she must follow. Anthony—he knew not whether he were alive or dead. If alive, he could not go to him whom he had driven from Hall, and to Willsworthy, of all places under the sun, he would not go. Luke he could not ask to receive him, who was but a curate, and whom he had refused to speak to since he had been the means of uniting his son to the daughter of his deadly rival and enemy. What sort of life could he live with no one to care for him—with nothing to occupy his mind and energies?

How could he appear in church, at market, now that it was known that he was a ruined man? Would not every one point at him, and sneer and laugh at his misfortunes? He had not made a friend, except Mr. Crymes; and not having a friend, he had no one to sympathize with, to pity him.

Then he thought of his sister Magdalen. Her little annuity he would have to pay out of his reduced income; he might live with her—with her whom he had treated so unceremoniously, so rudely—over whom he had held his chin so high, and tossed it so contemptuously.

What would Fox do? Would he not take every occasion to insult him, to make his life intolerable to him, use him as his butt for gibes, anger him to madness—the madness of baffled hate that cannot revenge a wrong?

Anything were better than this.

The old man walked towards the sawpit. The tree was there, lying on the frame ready to be sawn into planks, and already it was in part cut through. The men had been there, begun their task; then had gone off, probably to the house to drink his cyder and discuss his ruin.

Below his feet the pit gaped, some ten or eleven feet, with oak sawdust at the bottom, dry and fragrant. Round the edges of the pit the hart's-tongue fern and the pennywort had lodged between the stones and luxuriated, the latter throwing up at this time its white spires of flower.

A magnificent plume of fern occupied one end of the trough. Bushes and oak-coppice were around, and almost concealed the sawpit from the road.

That sawpit seemed to the old man to be a grave, and a grave that invited an occupant.

He knelt on the cross-piece on which the upper sawyer stands when engaged on his work, and round it fastened firmly the end of the rope; then fixed the halter with running knot about his own neck.

He stood up and bent his grey head, threw his hat on one side, and looked down into the trough.

He had come to the end. Everything was gone, or going, from him—even a sepulchre with his fathers, for, if he died by his own hand, then he would not be buried with them, but near that sawpit, where a cross-way led to Black Down. It was well that so it should be; so he would retain, at all events, six foot of the paternal inheritance. That six foot would be his inalienably, and that would be better than banish-

ment to the churchyard of Peter Tavy. But he would make sure that he carried with him something of the ancestral land. He crept along the beam, with the rope about his neck, fastened near the middle of the sawpit, like a dog running to the extent of his chain, and scrabbled up some of the soil, with which he stuffed his ears and his mouth, and filled his hands.

Thus furnished, he stepped back, and again looked down. He did not pray. He had no thought about his soul—about heaven. His mind was fixed on the earth—the earth of Hall, with which he must part, with all but what he held, and with which he had choked his mouth.

"Earth to earth!"

No words of the burial office would be said over him; but what cared he? It would be the earth of Hall that went back to the earth of Hall when he perished and was buried there. His flesh had been nourished by the soil of Hall, his mind had lived on nothing else. He could not speak as his mouth was full. How sweet, how cool tasted that clod upon his tongue under his palate!

Though he could not speak he formed words in his mind, and, he said to himself:

"Thrice will I say 'Earth to earth!' and then leap down."

"Once the words were said, and now he said them again, in his mind—"

"Earth to earth!"

There was a large black spider on the oak tree, running up and down the chopped section, and now,

all at once, it dropped, but did not fall—it swung at the end of its silken fibre. Mr. Cleverdon watched it. As the spider dropped, so, in another minute, would he. Then the spider ran up its thread. The old man shook his head. When he fell he would remain there motionless. What then would the spider do? Would it swing and catch at him, and proceed to construct a cobweb between him and the side of the pit? He saw himself thus utilized as a sidestay for a great cobweb, and saw a brown butterfly, with silver underwings, now playing about the pit-mouth, come to the cobweb and be caught in it. He shook his head—he must not yield to these illusions.

"Earth to——"

A hand was laid on his shoulder, an arm put about his waist; he was drawn to the side of the pit, and the rope hastily disengaged from his throat.

With blank, startled eyes old Squire Cleverdon looked on the face of his preserver. It was that of Luke, his nephew.

"Uncle!—dear uncle!"

Luke took the halter, unloosed it from where it had been fastened to the beam, knotted it up, and flung it far away among the bushes.

The old man said nothing, but stood before his nephew with downcast eyes slightly trembling.

Luke was silent also for some while, allowing the old man to recover himself. Then he took his arm in his own and led him back to the horse.

"Let me alone! Let me go!" said old Cleverdon.

"Uncle, we will go together. I was on my way to

you. I had heard in what trouble you were, and I thought it possible I might be of some assistance to you."

"You!" The Squire shook his head. "I want over a thousand pounds at once."

"That I have not got. Can I not help you in any other way?"

"There is no other way."

"What has happened," said Luke, "is by the will of God, and you must accept it, and look to Him to bless your loss to you."

"Ah, you are a parson!" said the old man.

Luke did not urge him to remount his horse. He kept his arm, and helped him along, as though he were conducting a sick man on his walk, till he had conveyed him some distance from the sawpit. As the Squire's step became firmer, he said:

"A hard trial is laid on you, dear uncle, but you must bear up under it as a man. Do not let folk think that it has broken you down. They will respect you when they see your courage and steadfastness. Put your trust in God, and He will give you in place of Hall something better than that—better a thousand times, which hitherto you have not esteemed."

"What is that?" asked the old man, loosening his arm, standing still, and looking Luke shyly in the face.

"What is that?" repeated Luke. "Wait! Trust in God and see."

CHAPTER LIII.

BAD TIDINGS.

On reaching Hall, the first person that came to meet them was Bessie. She had returned, anxious about her father, and to collect some of her clothes. On arriving, she had been told that he had not gone to bed all night, that he looked ill and aged; that he had ordered his horse and had ridden away without telling any one whither he was going, and that some hours had elapsed without his re-appearing. Bess was filled with uneasiness, and was about to send out the servants to inquire as to the direction he had taken, and by whom he had been last seen, when the old man returned on foot, leaning on Luke, who led the horse by the bridle.

"Has any accident happened?" she asked, with changing colour.

The old man gave a shy glance at her, then let his eyes fall to the ground. He said nothing, and went into the house to his room. Bess's uneasiness was not diminished. Luke spared her the trouble of asking questions. He told her that he had met her father on the way, and that they had come to an understanding, so that the estrangement that had existed between them since Anthony's marriage was at an end.

Bessie's colour mounted to her temples, she was glad to hear this; and Luke saw her pleasure in her *eyes. He took* her hand.

Then she lowered her eyes and said: "Oh, Luke! what am I to do? Can I withdraw the promise made yesterday? I cannot fulfil it. I did not know it then. Now it is impossible. I can never love Fox—never respect him. He has behaved to my father in a manner that even if forgiven is not to be forgotten. And, indeed, I must tell you. He said he had struck Anthony and half killed him. I do not know what to think. Urith——"

"I know what Urith says. I was present. I saw the blow dealt. Fox did that—Urith bade him do it."

Bessie's breath caught. Luke hastened to reassure her.

"Anthony was not seriously hurt. Something he wore—a token on his breast—turned the point of the knife; but I am to blame, I am greatly to blame, I should have come and seen your father before your marriage and told him what I knew, then you would not have been drawn into this——"

"Oh, Luke!" interrupted Bessie, "I do not think anything you said would have altered his determination. He was resolved, and when resolved, nothing will turn him from his purpose. As we were married at Tavistock and not in your church, you were not spoken to about it."

"No—but I ought to have seen your father. I shall ever reproach myself with my neglect, or rather my cowardice, and now I have news, and that sad, to tell you. It is vague, and yet, I believe, trustworthy. Gloine, who went from my parish to join the Duke of Monmouth, has come back. He rode the whole way on a

horse that belonged to some gentleman who had been shot. There has been a battle somewhere in Somersetshire, Gloine could not tell me the exact spot, but it does not matter. The battle has been disastrous—our side—I mean the side to which nearly all England wished well, has been routed. There was mismanagement, quarrelling between the leaders; bad generalship, I have no doubt; it was but a beginning of a fight; and then a general rout. Our men—I mean the Duke's —were dispersed, surrendered in batches, were cut and shot down, and those who fled were pursued in all directions, and slain without mercy. What has happened to the Duke I do not know, Gloine could not tell me. But Mr. Crymes is dead. He passed the coach and saw the soldiers plundering it, and the poor old gentleman had been shot and dragged out of it, and thrown on the grass."

"But Anthony!"

"Of him, Gloine could not tell me much. He was greatly in favour with the Duke and with Lord Grey. There was a considerable contingent of men from Tavistock and the villages round, who had been collected by the activity of Mr. Crymes and one or two others, whose names we will now strive to keep in the background; and, as Mr. Crymes himself was incapacitated by age and infirmity from officering this band of recruits, Anthony was appointed captain, and I am proud to say that our little battalion showed more determination, made a better fight, and was less ready to throw away arms and run, than was any other. That is what Gloine says."

"And he can say nothing of Anthony?"

"Nothing, Gloine says that when the rout was complete, he caught a horse that was running by masterless, and mounting, rode into Devon and home as hard as he could, but of Anthony he saw nothing. Whether he fell, or whether he is alive, we shall not know till others come in; but, Bess, we must not disguise from ourselves the fact that, supposing he has escaped with his life, he will stand in extreme danger. He has been one of the few gentlemen who has openly joined the movement, he has commanded a little company drawn from his own neighbourhood, and has given the enemy more trouble than some others. A price will be set on his head, and if he be caught, he will be executed —almost certainly. He may return here if alive, he probably will do so; but he must be sent abroad or kept in hiding till pursuit is over."

"Oh, poor Anthony!" said Bessie. "Will you tell my father?"

"Not at present. He has his own troubles now. Besides, we know nothing for certain. I will not speak till further and fuller news reaches me. But, Bess, you must be with him—he is not in a state to be left alone. Now, may be, in his broken condition, he may feel your regard in a manner he has not heretofore."

"Heigh, there. Have you heard?"

The voice was that of Fox. He came up heated, excited.

"Heigh, there! Luke, and you, Bess, too? Have you heard the tidings? There's our man, Coaker, come back—came on one of the coach-horses. There has

been a pretty upset at the end, as I thought. My father is dead—the soldiers shot him as he sat in the coach, and proceeded to turn everything out in search of spoil. What a merciful matter," he grinned, without an audible laugh, "that the five or six hundred pounds had been lifted on Black-Down instead of falling into the hands of the Papist looters! Aye?"

Neither Luke nor Elizabeth answered him.

"You know that now I am owner of the little estate in Buckland," said he, "such as it is—a poor, mean scrap that remains of what we Crymes——"

"You are now a Cleverdon," said Luke, dryly.

"But not for long. I shall change my name back, if it cost me fifty pounds. There is something more that I am. I am trustee for Julian till she marries—I step into my father's place. How do you suppose she will like that? How will she find herself placed under my management?" He laughed.

"Your father dead," said Luke, "one might expect of you some decent lamentation."

"Oh! I am sorry, I assure thee! But Lord! what else could I expect? And I thank Heaven it is no worse. I expected him to be drawn to Tyburn, hung, and disembowelled as a traitor. I swear to thee, Luke, I was rejoiced to hear he died honourably of a shot, since die he must. And, Anthony dead——"

"Anthony! Have you heard?"

"Nay—I cannot swear. But Coaker says it is undoubted. The troopers were in full pursuit of our Tavistock company of Jack-Fools, cutting them down *and not* sparing one. Anthony cannot escape. If he

ran from the field, he will be caught elsewhere. If they spitted the common men, they will not spare the commanding officer."

"Poor Anthony!" sighed Bess.

"Ah! poor Anthony, indeed, with nothing left at all now—not even the chance of life! But never mind poor Anthony, Bess; please to consider me. I know not but what now I shall be able at my ease to pay that attorney from Exeter—if I choose; but that shall only be to make Hall my own, and no sooner has my money passed hands than out turns your father. He and I will never be able to pull together. He has his notions and I mine. No man can serve two masters, as Parson Luke will tell thee; and neither can a land be held by and serve two masters, one choosing this and t'other that. No sooner is Hall cleared with my money than out walks the old Squire. Then you and I, Bess——"

"You and I will remain as separate as we are at present," answered Elizabeth. "I go with my father. Never will be with you."

"As you will," said Fox, contemptuously. "Your beauty is not such as to make me wish to keep you."

"Then so let it be. We have been married, only to part us more completely," said Bess. Then, turning to Luke, she said, "I cannot help myself. I swore with good intention of keeping my oath, but I cannot even attempt to observe it. He—" she pointed to Fox, "he has shown me how impossible it is."

Luke did not speak. The words of Fox had made him indignant; but he said nothing, as any words of

his he felt would be thrown away, and could only lead to a breach between him and Fox, in which he must get the worst, as unable to retort with the insolence and offensiveness of the latter. He looked with wonder at Bessie, and admired her quiet dignity and strength. He could see that, with all his rudeness to her, Fox stood somewhat in awe of her.

"Yes," said Fox, "Anthony is dead; I do not affect to be sorry, after having received from him a blow that has half-blinded me—a continuous reminder of him."

"His sister strove to make amends for that yesterday," said Luke, unable further to control his wrath. "You then demanded of her an atonement far more costly than any wrong done you."

Fox shrugged his shoulders. "A pretty atonement —when she flouts me, and refuses to follow me."

Bessie, shrinking from hearing her name used, entered the house, and went into her father's room.

She found the old man there, lying on a long leather couch against the wall, asleep.

She stood watching him for a moment in silence, and without stirring. His hair was certainly more grey than it had been, and his face had greatly changed, both in expression and in age. The old hardness had given way, and distress—pain, such as never before had marked his countenance, now impressed it, even in sleep. He had probably hardly closed his eyes for many nights, as he had been full of anxiety about the fate of Hall, and the success of his scheme for its preservation. The last night had been spent in complete and torturing

 Now Nature had asserted her rights; weary

to death, he had cast himself on his couch, and had almost immediately lost consciousness.

After observing her father for some little while, Bessie stepped lightly back into the passage, closed the door, then sought Luke, who was standing before the house with his finger to his lips, a frown on his brows, looking at the ground steadily. Fox was gone.

Bessie touched him, and beckoned that he should follow, then led him to her father's parlour, opened the door gently, and with a sign to step lightly and keep silence, showed him the sleeping Squire. A smile lighted her homely but pleasant face; and then she gave him a token to depart.

For herself, she had resolved to remain there, her proper post now was by her father. She knelt at his couch, without touching him, and never turned an eye from him. In her heart swelled up a hope, a belief, that at length the old man might come to recognize her love, and to value it.

An hour—then another passed, and neither the sleeper nor the watcher stirred; when suddenly the old man opened his eyes, in full wakefulness, and his eyes rested on her. He looked at her steadily, but with growing estrangement; then a little hectic colour kindled in his pale face, and he turned his head away.

Then Bessie put her arm under his neck, and drew his head to her bosom, pressed it there, and kissed him, saying,

"My father! my dear, dear father!"

He drew a long and laboured breath, disengaged himself from her arms, and putting down his feet, sat up

on the couch. She was kneeling before him, looking into his face.

"Go—" said he, after awhile, "I have been hard with thee, Bess! I have done thee wrong."

She would have clasped and kissed him again, but he gently yet firmly put her from him, and yet—in so doing kept his eyes intently, questioningly, fixed on her. Was it to be—even as Luke said, that in losing Hall he was to find something he had not hitherto prized?

CHAPTER LIV.

A DAISY.

As briefly as may be, we must give some account of the venture of Monmouth, which ended in such complete disaster.

Charles, natural son of Charles II. by Lucy Walters, born in 1649, created Duke of Monmouth in 1663 by his father, was, as Pepys writes, "a most pretty spark." "Very handsome, extremely well made, and had an air of greatness answerable to his birth," says the Countess D'Aulnay; he was his father's favourite son, and for some time it was supposed that King Charles II. would proclaim his legitimacy and constitute him heir to the Throne. He was vastly popular with the nation, which looked up to him as the protector of the Protestant religion against the Duke of York, whose accession to the Throne was generally dreaded on account of his

known attachment to the Roman Church. James therefore always regarded him with jealousy and suspicion—a jealousy and suspicion greatly heightened and intensified by a memorable progress he had made in 1680, in the West, when incredible numbers flocked to see him. He first visited Wiltshire, and honoured Squire Thynne, of Longleate House, with his company for some days. Thence he journeyed into Somersetshire, where he found the roads lined with enthusiastic peasants, who saluted him with loud acclamations as the champion of the Protestant religion. In some towns and villages the streets and highways were strewn with herbs and flowers. When the Duke came within a few miles of White Ladington, the seat of George Speke, Esq., near Ilminster, he was met by two thousand riders, whose numbers rapidly increased to twenty thousand. His personal beauty, the charm of his manners, won the hearts of every one, and thus the way was paved for the enthusiastic reception he was to receive later when he landed at Lyme, in Dorsetshire, as a defender of religion and a claimant for the Throne.

On June 14th, 1685, that landing took place. It had been arranged between him and the Duke of Argyle that each should head an expedition with the same end, and that a landing should be effected simultaneously, one in Scotland, under Argyle, the other in England, under Monmouth. Money and nearly everything else was wanting, and Monmouth was dilatory and diffident of success. But finally, two handfuls of men were got together, some arms were purchased, and some ships freighted. Argyle sailed first, and landed before the

Duke of Monmouth, loth to tear himself from the arms of a beautiful mistress in Brussels, could summon resolution to sail. Argyle was speedily defeated and lodged in Edinburgh Castle on June 20th. Six days before his capture, Monmouth landed in Dorsetshire. He had with him about eighty officers and a hundred and fifty followers of various kinds, Scotch and English. Lord Stair, who had fled from the tyranny of James when Duke of York and Commissioner in Scotland, did not join the expedition; but Lord Grey did, an infamous man, who was one main cause of its miscarriage. The ablest head among the party was that of Fletcher of Saltoun, who in vain endeavoured to dissuade the Duke from an enterprise which he saw was premature and desperate, but from which he was too brave and generous to withdraw.

On landing at Lyme, Monmouth set up his standard, and issued a proclamation that he had come to secure the Protestant religion, and to extirpate Popery, and deliver the people of England from "the usurpation and tyranny of James, Duke of York." This was dispersed throughout the country, was passed from hand to hand, and with extraordinary rapidity was carried to the very Land's End, raising the excitement of the people, who chafed at the despotism of King James II., and were full of suspicion as to his purposes. In the Declaration, promises were made of free exercise of their religion to all kinds of Protestants of whatever sect; that the Parliament should be annually chosen; that sheriffs should also be annually elected; that the grievous Militia Act should be repealed; and that to the Corpora-

tions of the towns should be restored their ancient liberties and charters.

Allured by these promises, the yeomanry and peasantry flocked to Monmouth's standard, and, had the Duke entrusted the volunteers to the direction of a man of talent and integrity, it is not impossible that he would have met with success.

But the infamous Lord Grey was made commander, and when, shortly after landing, the Earl of Feversham, a French favourite of King James, threw a detachment of regular troops into Bridport, some six miles from Lyme, and Monmouth detached three hundred men to storm the town, Lord Grey, who was entrusted with the command, deserted his men at the first brush, and galloping back into Lyme, carried the tidings of defeat, when actually the volunteers, with marvellous heroism, had accomplished their task, and had obtained a victory.

Monmouth inquired of Captain Matthews, what was to be done with Lord Grey.

Matthews answered as a soldier, "You are the only general in Europe who would ask such a question."

The Duke, however, dared not punish Lord Grey, and actually entrusted to him the command of the cavalry, the most important arm he had. Having thus given a position of trust to the worst man he could, he lost the ablest man in his party, Fletcher, who had quarrelled with a Somersetshire gentleman about his horse, which led to a duel, in which the Somersetshire man was shot, and Fletcher had to be dismissed.

On June 15th, four days after landing, the Duke marched from Lyme with a force that swelled to three

thousand men. He passed through Axminster, and on the 16th was at Chard; thence he marched to Taunton, his numbers increasing as he advanced. At Taunton his reception was most flattering; he was welcomed as a deliverer sent from heaven; the poor rent the air with their joyful acclamations, the rich threw open their houses to him and his followers, his way was strewn with flowers, and twenty-six young girls of the best families in the town appeared before Monmouth, and presented him with a Bible. Monmouth kissed the sacred book, and swore to defend the truth it contained with his life's blood.

Here it was that he was met by the detachment from Tavistock and its neighbourhood. The men came in singly or in pairs, and somewhat later Mr. Crymes appeared in his coach. Anthony was immediately presented to the Duke, who, taken by his manly appearance, at once appointed him to be captain of the contingent from Tavistock.

On June 20th Monmouth claimed the title of King. It was a rash and fatal mistake, for it at once alarmed his followers, and deterred many from joining him. Many of those who followed him, or were secretly in his favour, still respected the hereditary rights of kingship; and others had a lingering affection for Republican institutions. These two opposite classes were dissatisfied by this assumption. Moreover, the partizans of the Prince of Orange, already pretty numerous, considered this claim as infringing the rights of James's eldest daughter, Mary, Princess of Orange, who, by birth and [illegible] religion, stood next in order of succession.

On June 22nd Monmouth advanced to Bridgewater, where he was again proclaimed King; and here he divided his forces into six regiments, and formed two troops out of about a thousand horse that followed him.

We need not follow his extraordinary course after this, marked by timidity and irresolution.

Few of the gentlemen of the counties of the West joined him, and the influx of volunteers began to fail. Discouragement took possession of the Duke's spirits; and, when St. Swithin's rains set in before their proper time, not only was his ardour, but also that of his followers, considerably damped.

At length, on July 5th, it was resolved to attack the Royal army, encamped on Sedgemoor, near Bridgewater, where the negligent disposition made by Lord Feversham invited attack. Here the decisive battle was fought. The men following Monmouth's standard showed in the action an amount of native courage and adherence to the principles of duty which deserved better leaders. They threw the veteran forces into disorder, drove them from their ground, continued the fight till their ammunition failed them, and would at last have obtained a victory, had not the misconduct of Monmouth and the cowardice or treachery of Grey prevented it.

In the height of the action, when the fortune of the day was wavering, Lord Grey told Monmouth that all was lost—that it was more than time to think of shifting for himself. Accordingly, he and Monmouth, and a few other officers, rode off the field, leaving the poor enthusiasts, without order or instructions, to be

massacred by a pitiless enemy. The battle lasted about three hours, and ended in a rout. The rebels lost about fifteen hundred men in the battle and pursuit; but the Royal forces had suffered severely.

Urith sat in the parlour at Willsworthy. She had reverted to the stolid, dark mood that had become habitual with her. Her hands were in her lap. She was plucking at the ring affixed to the broken token, through which passed the suspending ribbon. But for this movement of the fingers of the right hand she might have been taken to be a figure cut out of stone, so still was her face, so motionless her figure; not a change of colour, not a movement of muscle, not a flicker of the eyelid betrayed that she was alive and sentient; no tears filling the eyes, no sigh escaping her lips.

The heat of her brow showed that she was labouring under an oppressive sorrow.

She spoke and acted mechanically when roused into action and to speech, and then instantly fell back into her customary torpor. Only when so roused did the stunned spirit flutter to her eyes, and bring a slight suffusion of colour into her face. Next moment she was stone as before.

She had been given, by Mistress Penwarne, some flowers to arrange for the table.

"For his grave?" asked Urith, "and for my baby."

She took them eagerly, began to weave them, then they fell from her fingers into her lap, and she remained unconscious, holding the stalks.

The old lady came to her again, and scolded her.

"There! there! this is too bad. Take your token, and give me the flowers. I must do everything."

She put the broken medal again into Urith's hand, and left her, carrying the flowers away.

Urith was at once back again under her overwhelming cloud — the ever-present conviction that Anthony was dead, and that she had killed him.

She saw him at every moment of the day, except when roused from her dream, lying across the hearthstone with his heart pierced. She had seen a little start of blood from the wound, when it was dealt, and this she saw day and night welling up inexhaustibly in tiny wavelets, flowing over his side, and falling in a long trickle sometimes connected, sometimes a mere drip upon the hearthstone, and then running along the pavement in a dark line.

This little rill never dried up, never became full; it pushed its way along slowly, always about the breadth of the little finger, and standing up like a surcharged vein, hemmed in by grains of dust and particles of flue. Urith was ever watching the progress of this rivulet of blood, as it stole forward, now turning a little to this side from some knot in the floor, then running into a crevice and staying its onward progress till it had filled the chink, and converted it into a puddle. She watched it rise to the edge of a slate slab, swell above it, tied back, as it were, by each jagged point in the slate edge, then overleap it, and run further. The rill was ever advancing towards the main entrance

to the hall, yet never reaching it, making its way steadily, yet making no actual progress.

On more than one occasion Urith stooped to remove a dead wasp that stood in the way of its advance, or to sop up with her kerchief some splash of water which would have diluted its richness.

Now, on the floor, lay a daisy-head that had fallen from the flower bunch Mistress Penwarne had brought to her and then had taken away. Urith's eyes were on the daisy, and it seemed to her that the red rill was touching it. It was nothing to Urith that she was in the parlour, and that Anthony had fallen in the hall. Wherever she went, into whatsoever room, into the garden, out on the moor—it was ever the hall she was in, and the floor everywhere, whether of oak boards or of soft turf, or of granite spar, was in her eyes the pavement of the hall, and ever over that pavement travelled the little thread of blood, groping its way, like an earthworm, as if endowed with a half-consciousness that gave it direction without organs of sense.

And now on the floor lay the garden daisy-head, and towards it the purple-red streamlet was pushing on; was the daisy already touched, and the edge of the fringe of petals just tinctured? Or was its redness due to the reflection on the pure white of the advancing blood? The dye or glow was setting inward, whatever it was, and would soon stain the petals crimson, and then sop the golden heart and turn it black.

How long this process would take Urith did not ask, for time was nothing to her. But she looked and [illegible]ited, she fancied that she saw the clotting together

of the rays, and their gradual discoloration as the red liquid rose up through the yellow stamens.

And now the flower-head began to stir and slide over the floor, and the blood-streak to crawl after it.

Urith slowly rose to her feet, and, with bent head observing the flower, step by step followed it. There was a draught blowing along the floor from a back door that was open, and this stirred and carried forward the light blossom. Urith never inquired what moved the daisy; it was natural, it was reasonable, that it should recoil from the scent and touch of blood.

As the daisy-head slid forward—now with easy motion, now with a leap and a skip—so did, in Urith's diseased fancy, the rill of blood advance in pursuit, always just touching it, but never entirely enveloping it.

Urith stepped forward slowly towards the hall-door and opened it, to let the flower-head escape. Had she not done so, in a moment the daisy would have been caught, and have sopped up the blood like a sponge, lost all its whiteness, and become but a shapeless clot in the stream.

The draught, increased by the opening of the door, carried the little delicate blossom forward rapidly, into the hall and along its floor, and after it shot the head of the rivulet, pointed, like that of a snake darting on its prey. Then the daisy was arrested suddenly, it had struck against an obstruction—a man's foot.

Urith rose from her stooping position, and saw before her the man whose foot had stopped the daisy—it was Anthony, standing on the hearthstone. To her dazed sense it was nothing that the blood-stream should

run in the course opposed to that it might have been supposed to run, from the parlour to the hall, from the door to the hearth. To her mind the ideal hall and the actual hall only coincided where they overlapped.

And now, standing on the actual hearthstone, with the fancied blood-stream running up to, and dancing about his foot, was Anthony.

"Urith!"

The voice was that of Anthony.

He had seen Luke, he knew in what condition he might expect to find her; and he had come to the house to see her, to let her light unsuspectingly on him, in the hopes that the surprise might rouse her, and change the tenor of her thoughts.

He looked at her with love and pity in his heart, in his eyes, and with a choking in the throat.

Urith remained standing where she had risen from her bowed position, and for a long time kept her eyes steadily fixed on him; but there was neither surprise nor pleasure in them.

Presently she said slowly, with a wave of her hand, "No! I am not deceived. Anthony is dead. I killed him."

Then she averted her face, and at once fell into her usual trance-like condition.

CHAPTER LV.

FATHER AND SON AGAIN.

ANTHONY sat in the house of his cousin Luke, his head in his hand. Bessie had come there to see him. She had been told of his return, and Luke had advised her to meet him at the parsonage.

"Oh, Tony!—dear, dear Tony! I am so glad you are back. Now, please God, all things will go better."

"I do not see any turn yet—any possible," said Anthony.

His tone was depressed, his heart was weighed down with disappointment at his inability to rouse Urith.

"Do not say that, my brother," said Bessie, taking his hand between both of hers, "God has been very good in bringing you safe and sound back to Willsworthy."

"No exceeding comfort that!" Anthony responded, "when I find Urith in such a state. She does not know me again."

"You must not be discouraged," urged Bess. "She has this darkness on her now, but it will pass away as the clouds rise from off the moor. We must wait and trust and pray."

"Remember, Anthony," added Luke, "that she received a great shock which has, as it were, stunned her. She requires time to recover from it. Perhaps her reason will return gradually, just as you say she

herself came groping along step by step to you. You must not be out of heart because at the first meeting she was strange. Perhaps some second shock is needed as startling as the first to restore her to the condition in which she was. I have heard of a woman thrown into a trance by a flash of lightning, unable to speak or stir. In a second thunderstorm, months after, there was another flash, she was cured, and the interval between was gone from her recollection."

Anthony shook his head.

"You both say this because you desire to comfort me, but I have little expectation, Bess," said he, pressing his sister's hand. "God forgive me that I have never hitherto considered and valued your love to me, but have imposed on you, and been rough and thoughtless. One must suffer oneself to value love in others."

His sister threw her arms about his neck, and the tears of happiness flowed down her cheeks. "Oh, Tony! this is too much! and father also! He loves me now."

"And you, Bess, you have been hardly used. But how stands it now betwixt you and Fox?"

Bessie looked down.

"My father forced you to take him; I know his way, and you had not the strength to resist. Good heavens! I ought to have been at your side to nerve you to opposition."

"No, Tony, my father employed no force; but he told me how matters stood with regard to Hall, and I was willing to take Fox, thinking thereby to save the *estate.*"

"And Fox, what is he going to do?"

"I cannot tell. Nothing, I think. He says he has the money, but he will not pay the mortgage; and yet I cannot believe he will allow Hall to slip away. I think he is only holding out to hurt my father, with whom he is very angry because the state of matters was not told him before the marriage."

"You suffered her to throw herself away?" asked Anthony, turning to Luke.

"I did wrong," he said. "I ought to have spoken to your father, but he had forbidden me the house, and—but no! I will make no excuse for myself. I did wrong. Indeed—indeed, Anthony, among us all there is only one who stands blameless and pure and beautiful in integrity—and that is our dear Bessie. I did wrong, you acted wrongly, your father, Fox, all—all are blameworthy but she—nay! Bess, suffer me to speak; what I say I feel, and so must all who know the circumstances. The Squire must have eyes blinder than those of the mole not to see your unselfishness, and a heart harder than a stone not to esteem your worth."

"I pray you," pleaded Bessie, with crimson brow, "I pray you, not another word about me."

"Very well, we will speak no more thereof now," said Luke, "but I must say something to Anthony. You, cousin, should now make an attempt to obtain your father's forgiveness."

"What has he to forgive?" asked Anthony, impatiently. "Are not his own hard-heartedness, and his hatred of Richard Malvine, the cause of all this misery?"

"His hard-heartedness and hatred have done much," said Luke; "but neither of these is the cause of Urith's condition. That is your own doing."

"Mine?" Though asked the question, yet he answered it to himself, for his head sank, and he did not look his cousin in the face.

"Yes—yours," replied Luke. "It was your unfaithfulness to Urith that drove her——"

"I was not unfaithful," interrupted Anthony.

"You hovered on the edge of it—sufficiently near infidelity to make her believe that you had turned your heart away from her for another. There was the appearance, if not the reality, of treason. On that Fox worked, and wrought her into a condition of frenzy in which she was not responsible for what she said and did. From that she has not recovered."

"Curse Fox!" swore Anthony, clenching his hands.

"No, rebuke and condemn yourself," said Luke. "Fox could have fired nothing had not you supplied the fuel."

Anthony remained with his head bowed on the table. He put up his hands to it, and did not speak for some time. At last he lowered his hands, laid the palms on the table, and said, frankly, "Cousin! sister! I am to blame. I confess my fault freely, and I would give the whole world to undo the past."

"Then begin a new life, Tony," said Luke, "by going to your father and being reconciled to him."

"I cannot. I cannot. How can I forget what he has done to Bess?"

"And how can your heavenly Father forgive you

your trespass if you remain at enmity with your earthly father?" asked Luke, sternly. "No, Tony, begin aright. Do what is clearly your first duty, and then walk straight forward, trusting in God."

A struggle ensued in Anthony's breast. Then Bess took his hand again between her own, and said, "You have been brave, Tony, fighting on the battle-field; now show your true courage in fighting against your own pride. Come!" She held his hand still, and drew him after her. She had risen.

"Very well!" said Anthony, standing up. "In God's name."

"He has heard that you are returned," added Bessie. "It will be a pleasure to him to see you again."

On reaching Hall, Elizabeth found her father in his room. He was seated at his table, engaged on his accounts, turning over the list of sums due to him, reckoning his chances of recovering these debts, considering what money he could scrape together by cutting down timber, and by the sale of stock. He thought that he might raise five or six hundred pounds at once, and perhaps more, but the time was most unpropitious for a sale. It was the wrong season in which to throw oak, and to sell the crops in the ground would at that time be ruinous at the prices they would fetch.

When the door opened, and Bessie entered with Anthony, the old man looked up, and said nothing. His sleep had restored his strength, and with it something of his natural hardness. His lips closed.

"Well, father!" said Anthony, "Here am I, returned, without a shot through me."

"So I see," said his father, dryly.

Anthony, disappointed at his reception, was inclined to withdraw, but mastered his disappointment, and going up to the table extended his hand, and said,

"Come, father! forgive me, if I have vexed you."

Old Cleverdon made no counter-movement. The request had been made somewhat coolly.

"Father! what did you promise me?" asked Bessie, her heart fluttering between hope and discouragement. "Here is Anthony, whose life has been in jeopardy, come back, asking your forgiveness, and that is what you required."

Then the old man coldly placed his hand in that of his son; but he said no word, nor did he respond to the pressure with which Anthony grasped him. His hand lay cold and impassive in that of his son. Then Anthony's cheeks flamed, and a sparkle of wrath burnt in his eye. Bessie looked up to him entreatingly, and then turned pleadingly to her father, and implored him to speak. Anthony did not await the word, but drew his hand away.

"So," said the old man, "you are back. Take care of yourself; you are not yet out of danger." And he took up again the papers he had been examining.

"I am interrupting you," said Anthony; "anything is of more interest to you than your own son."

He would have left the room, but Bessie held him back. Then she went up to her father and drew the papers away from him. In her fear lest this meeting should prove resultless she became bold. The old man frowned at her audacity, but he said nothing.

"Father," said Anthony, "I came here as a duty to you, to tell you that I ask nothing of you but your forgiveness for having been hot-headed in marrying without and against your will."

"I have nothing else to give," answered Mr. Cleverdon. "I no longer call this place mine. The place where I was born, and for which I have toiled, which I have dreamed about, loved—I have nothing more, nothing at all." He was filled with bitter pity for himself. "I, in my destitution, must thank you that it has seemed worth while to you to come and see me."

"Father!" gasped Bessie.

The old man proceeded: "I cannot forget that all this comes to pass because you disregarded my wishes. Had you married Julian, had you even proposed to marry her, this could not have happened. It is this," his voice rang hard and metallic, and the light in his eye was the glisten of a flint; "it is this that is the cause of all. It brings my grey head into the dust. It deprives the Cleverdons of a place in the county, it blots them out with a foul smear." The pen he had been holding had fallen on a parchment, and, with his finger, the old man wiped the blotch and streaked it over the surface.

"I could not marry Julian," said Anthony, with difficulty controlling himself. "A man is not to be driven to the altar as is a poor girl." He turned to his sister. "I am sorry for your sake that Hall goes—not for mine; I do not care for it. It has been the curse that has rested on and blasted your heart, father, turning it against your own children, marring the hap-

piness of my mother's life, taking all kindness and pity out of yours. It is like a swamp that sends up pestilential vapours, poisoning all who have aught to do with it."

The old man raised himself in his seat, and stared at him with wide-open eyes. This was not what he had deemed possible, that a child of his, a Cleverdon, should scoff at the land on which he was born, and which had nourished him.

"What has been cast into this thankless soil?" asked Anthony. "All good feelings you ever had for my mother, all, everything, has been sacrificed for it. But for Hall, she would have never taken you, and have been happy with the man of her heart. But for Hall, I would have been better reared, in self-restraint, in modesty, and kept to steady work. But for Hall, Bess's most precious heart would not have been thrown before that—that Fox! Very well, father. I am glad Hall goes. When it is gone clean away, I will see you again, and then maybe you will be more inclined for reconciliation."

The old man's blood was roused.

"It is easy to despise what can never be yours. The grapes are sour."

"The grapes were never other than sour," retorted Anthony. "And have set on edge all the teeth that have bitten into them. Sister—come!"

He went out of the door.

CHAPTER LVI.

EURYDICE.

In the hall again, seated in the window, is Urith. The window is planted high in the wall, so high, that to look out at it a sort of daïs must be ascended, consisting of a step. On this daïs is an ancient Tudor chair, high in the seat, as was usual with such chairs, made when floors were of slate and were rush-strewn, calculated to keep the feet above the stone, resting on a stool. Thus, elevated two steps above the floor, to with, on the daïs and the footstool, sat Urith as an enthroned queen, but a queen most forlorn, deadly pale, with sunken eyes, that had become so large as to seem to fill her entire face, which remained impassive, self-absorbed.

She made no allusion to Anthony; after he had withdrawn, she forgot that she had seen him. His presence when before her rendered her uneasy, so that, out of pity for her distress, he removed; when at once she sank back into the condition which had become fixed. But Anthony was again in the hall on this occasion, resolved once more to try to draw her from her lethargy.

She sat uplifted in her chair, trifling with the broken token. She was swinging it like a pendulum before her, and to do this she leaned forward that the ribbon might hang free of her bosom. Though her eyes rested on

the half-disc, its movement did not seem to interest her, and yet she never suffered the sway entirely to cease. So soon as the vibration became imperceptible, she put a finger to the coin and set it swinging once more.

Anthony had seated himself on the daïs step, and looked up into her face, and, as he looked, recalled how he had gazed in that same face on Devil Tor, when he had carried her through the fire. An infinite yearning and tenderness came on him. His heart swelled, and he said low, but distinct, with a quiver in his voice——

"Urith!"

She slowly turned her head, fixed her eyes on him, and said, "Aye."

"Urith! Do you not know me?"

She had averted her head again. Slowly, mechanically, she again turned her face to him, seemed to be gathering her thoughts, and then said,

"You are like Anthony. But you are not he. I cannot tell who you are."

"I am your Anthony!"

He caught her elbow, to draw her hand to him, to kiss it, but she started at the touch, shivered to the very feet, so as to rattle the stool under them, plucked her arm from him, and said quickly,

"Do not touch me. I will not be touched."

He heaved a long breath, and put his hand to his head.

"How can you forget me, Urith? Do you not recall how I had you in my arms, and leaped with you through the fire on Devil Tor?"

"I was carried by him—he is dead—not by you." She looked steadily at him. "No, not by you."

"It was I!" he exclaimed with vehemence. "I set you on my horse, dearest. It was I—I—I. Oh Urith! do not pretend not to know me! I have been away, in danger of my life, and I thought in the battle of you, only of you. Urith! my love! Turn your eyes on me. Look steadily at me. Do you remember how, when I had set you on my horse, I stood with my hand on the neck, and my eyes on you. You dazzled me then. My head spun, Urith! dear Urith, then I first knew that you only could be mine, that nowhere in the whole world could I find another I would care for. And yet—whilst I discovered that, I foresaw something dreadful, it was undefined, a mere shadow—and now it has come. Look me in the eyes, my darling! look me in the eyes, and you must know me."

She obeyed him, in the same mechanical, dead manner, and said, "I will not thus be addressed, I am no man's darling. I was the darling of Anthony once —a long time ago; but he ceased to love me; and he is dead. I killed him."

"Anthony never ceased to love you. It is false. He always loved you, but sometimes more than at other times, for his self-love rose up and smothered his love for you—but never for long."

"Did Anthony never cease to love me? How do you know that? How can you know that? You are deceiving me."

"It is true. None know it as I do."

She shook her head.

"Listen to me, Urith. Anthony never loved any but you."

"He had loved Julian," answered Urith. "He had from a child, and first love always lasts, it is tough and enduring."

"No, he never loved her. I swear to you."

She shook her head again, but drew a long breath, as though shaking off something of her load. "I cannot think you know," she said, after a pause.

"I know Anthony as myself." He caught her hand. "I insist—look me steadily in the face."

She obeyed. Her eyes were without light, her hand was cold, and shrinking from his touch, but he would not let it go. For a while there was symptom of struggle in her face, as though she desired to withdraw her eyes from him, but his superior will overcame the dim, half-formed desire, and then into her eyes came a faint glimmer of inquiry, then of vague alarm.

"Urith?"

"It is a long way down," she said.

"A long way down? What do you mean?"

"I am looking into hell."

"What! through my eyes?"

"I do not know; I am looking and it goes down deep, then deeper, and again deeper. I am sinking, and at last I see him, he is far, far away down there in flames." She paused, and intensity of gaze came into her eyes. "In chains." She still looked, the iris of each orb contracting as though actually strained to see something afar off. "Parched." Then she moaned, and her face quivered. "All because he loved Julian

when he was mine, and I shall go there too—for I killed him. I do not care. I could not be in heaven, and he there. I will be there—with him. I killed him."

Anthony was dismayed. It seemed impossible to bring her to recognition. But he resolved to make one more attempt.

He had let go her hand, and as he withdrew his eyes, her head returned to its former position; and once more she began to play with the pendant token.

Her profile was against the window. The consuming internal fire had burnt away all that was earthly, common in her, and had etherialized, refined the face.

"Urith!"

"Why do you vex me?"

"Turn fully round to me, Urith. What is that in your hand?"

"A token."

"Who gave it you?"

"It belonged to my father."

"It is broken."

"Everything is broken. Nothing is sound. Faith—trust—love." She paused between each word, as gathering her thoughts. "Everything is broken. Words—promises—oaths." Then she looked at the token. "Everything is broken. Hearts are broken—lives—unions—nothing is sound."

"Look at this, Urith."

Anthony drew from his breast the half-token that had belonged to his mother, and placed it against that which Urith held.

"See, Urith! they fit together."

It was so, the ragged edge of one closed into the ragged edge of the other.

She looked at it, seemed surprised, parted the portions, and reclosed them again.

"Everything broken may be mended, Urith," said Anthony. "Faith — trust — love. Do you see? Faith shaken and rent may become firm and sound again, and trust be restored as it was, and love be closed fast. Unions—a little parted by misunderstanding, by errors, may be healed. Do you see—Urith?"

She looked questioningly into his eyes, then back at the token, then into his eyes again.

"Is it so?" she asked, as in a dream.

"It is so, you see it is so. See—this broken half-token belonged to your father; that to my mother. Each had failed the other. All seemed lost and ruined for ever and ever. But it could not be—the broken pledge must be made whole, the promises redeemed, the parts must be reunited—and Urith! they are so in us."

He caught her by both hands, and looking into her face, began to sing, in low soft times:

An evening so clear
I would that I were
To kiss thy soft cheek
With the lightest of air.
The star that is twinkling
So brightly above
I would that I might be
To enlighten my love

A marvellous thing took place as he sang.

As he sang he saw—he saw the gradual return of the far-away soul. It was like Orpheus in Hades with his harp charming back the beloved, the lost Eurydice.

As he sang, step by step, nay, hardly so, hair's-breadth by hair's-breadth, as the dawn creeps up the sky over the moor, the spirit returned from the abysses where it had lost its way in darkness.

As he sang, Anthony doubted his own power, feared the slightest interruption, the least thing to intervene and scare the tremulous spirit-life back into the profound whence he was conjuring it.

The soul came, slow as the dawn, and yet, unlike the dawn in this, that it came under compulsion. It came as the treasure heaved from a mine, responsive to the effort employed to lift it; let that strain be desisted from, and it would remain stationary or fall back to where it was before.

An explosion of firearms, the crash of broken glass, and the rattle of bullets against the walls.

Instantly Anthony had leaped to his feet, caught Urith in his arms, and carried her where she was protected by the walls, for the bullets had penetrated the window and whizzed past her head.

At the same moment he saw Solomon Gibbs, who plunged into the hall, red, his wig on one side, shouting, "Tony! for God's sake fly! the troopers are here, sent after you. I've fastened the front door. Quick —be off. They'll string you up to the next tree."

He was deafened by blows against the main entrance, a solid oak-door on stout iron hinges let into the granite.

It was fastened by a cross-bar—almost a beam—that ran back into a socket in the jamb, when the door was unbarricaded.

"Tony! not an instant is to be lost. Make off. But by the Lord! I don't know how. They are clambering over the garden-wall to get at the back door. There are a score of them—troopers under Captain Fogg!"

Anthony had Urith in his arms. He looked at her, her eyes were fixed on him, full of terror, but also—intelligence.

"Anthony," she said, "what is it? Are you in danger?"

"They seek my life, dearest. It is forfeit. Never mind. Give me a kiss. We part in love."

"Anthony!" she clung to him. "Oh Anthony! What does it all mean?"

"I cannot tell you now. I suppose it is over. Thank God for the kiss, my love—my love."

The soldiers were battering at the door; two were up at the hall window, ripping and smashing at the panes. But there was no possibility of getting in that way, as each light was protected by stout iron stanchions.

"By the Lord! Tony. I'll fasten the back door!" shouted Mr. Gibbs. "Get out somehow—Urith! if you have wits, show him the trapway. Quick! not a moment is to be lost—whilst I bar the back door." Solomon flew out of the hall.

"Come," said Urith. "Anthony! I will show you." She held his hand. She drew it to her, and pressed it to her bosom. It touched the broken token—and she

had his half-token in her hand. "Anthony! when joined —to be again separate?"

They paused behind the main door, whilst the troopers thundered against it, pouring forth threats, oaths, and curses. They had drawn a great post from the barn over against the porch, and were driving this against the door. That door itself would stand any number of such blows, not so the hinges, or rather the granite jambs into which the iron crooks on which the hinges turned were let; as Anthony and Urith went by, a piece of granite started by the jar flew from its place, and fell at their feet. Another blow, and the crook would be driven in, and with it the upper portion of the door.

On the further side of the entrance passage, facing the door into the hall, was one that gave access to a room employed formerly as a buttery. In it were now empty casks, old saddles, and a variety of farm lumber, and, amongst them, that cradle that Anthony had despised, the cradle in which Urith had been lulled to her infantine slumbers.

Urith thrust the cradle aside, stooped, lifted a trap-door in the wooden-planked floor, and disclosed steps.

"Down there," she said, "fly—be quick—grope your way along, it runs in the thickness of the garden wall, and opens towards the chapel."

"One kiss, Urith!"

They were locked in each others' arms. Then Anthony disengaged himself.

A shout! The door had fallen in. A shot—it had been fired through the window by a soldier without

who had distinguished figures, though seen indistinctly, through the cobwebbed, dusky panes of the buttery window. Anthony disappeared down the secret passage. Urith put her hand to her head for a moment, then a sudden idea flashed through her brain; she caught with both arms the cradle, and crashed it down into the narrow passage, blocking it completely, and threw back the door that closed the entrance.

Next moment she and Solomon Gibbs were in the hands of the troopers who had burst in.

"Let go—that is a woman!" called the commanding officer. "Who are you?" This to Mr. Gibbs. "Are you Anthony Cleverdon? You a rebel?"

"I!—I a rebel! I never handled a sword in my life," answered Mr. Gibbs, without loss of composure; "but, my lads, at quarterstaff, I'm your man."

"Come!—who are you?"

"I am a man of the pen, Mr. Solomon Gibbs, attorney," answered the old fellow; "and, master—whatever be your name, I'd like to see your warrant—breaking into a house as you have done. I can't finger a sword or musket, but, by Saint Charles the Martyr, I can make you skip and squeak with a goose quill; and I will, for this offence."

"Search the house," ordered Captain Fogg, the officer in command of the party. "I know that the rebel is here; he has been seen. He cannot have escaped; he is secreted somewhere. Meanwhile keep this lawyer-rascal in custody. Here—you, madam!"—to Urith—"what is your name, and who are you?"

"*I am* Anthony Cleverdon's wife."

"And he—where is he?"

"Gone."

"Where is he gone to?"

"I do not know."

"Who is this fellow in the hands of my men?"

"He is my uncle, my mother's brother, Mr. Solomon Gibbs."

"Search the house," ordered the captain. "Madam, if we catch your husband, we shall make short work with him. Here is a post with which we broke open the door; we will run it out of an upstair window and hang him from it."

"You will not take him; he is away."

In the meantime the soldiers had over-run the house. No room, no closet, not the attics were unexplored. Anthony could not be found.

"What have we here?" A couple of troopers had lifted the trap and discovered the passage.

"It is choked," said the captain. "What is that? An old cradle thrust away there? 'Fore heaven! he can't have got off that way, the cradle stops the way. The bird had flown before we came up the hill."

CHAPTER LVII.

ANOTHER PARTING.

IMMEDIATELY after Sedgemoor, a small detachment had been sent under Captain Fogg to Tavistock from the Royal Army to seek out and arrest, and deal sum-

marily with, such volunteers as had joined the rebels from thence. Not only so, but the officer was enjoined to do his utmost to obtain evidence as to what gentlemen were disaffected to the King in that district; and to discover how far they were compromised in the attempt of Monmouth. Mr. Crymes' papers had been secured in his coach. They contained correspondence, but, for the most part, letters of excuse and evasion of his invitation to draw other men of position into the rebellion. With the letters were lists of the volunteers, and names of those who, it was thought, might be induced later to join the movement.

There existed in the mind of James and his advisers a suspicion that the Earl of Bedford, angry at the judicial murder of his son, was a favourer of Monmouth, and Captain Fogg was particularly ordered to find out, if such existed, proofs of his complicity.

The part Anthony had taken was too well known for him to remain neglected, and Fogg had been enjoined to seize and make short work with him.

Between two of the tors or granite crags that tower above the gorge of the Tavy where it bursts from the moor, at the place called The Cleave, are to be seen at the present day the massive remains of an oblong structure connecting the rocks, and forming a parallelogram. This was standing unruined at the time of our story. For whatever purpose it may have served originally, it had eventually been converted into a shelter-hut for cattle and for shepherds.

There was a doorway, and there were narrow loop-*hole windows;* the roof was of turf. At one end,

against the rock, a rude fireplace had been constructed; but there was no proper chimney—the smoke had to find its way, as best it might, out of a hole in the roof above, which also admitted some light and a good deal of rain. A huge castle of rock in horizontal slabs walled off the hut from the north, and gave it some shelter from the storms that blew thence. There was a door to the opening that could be fastened, which was well, as it faced the south-west, whence blew the prevailing wind laden with rain; but the windows were unglazed—they were mere slots, through which the wind entered freely. The floor was littered with bracken, and was dry. The crushed fern exhaled a pleasant odour.

Outside the hut, in early morning, sat Anthony with Urith among the rocks, looking down into the gorge. The valley was full of white mist, out of which occasionally a grey rock thrust its head. Above the mist the moor-peaks and rounded hills glittered in the morning sun.

Anthony sat with his arm about Urith; he had drawn her head upon his breast, and every moment he stooped to kiss it. Tears were in her eyes—tears sparkling as the dewdrops on bracken and heather—tears of happiness. The dusky shadows of the past had rolled away: a shock had thrown her mind off its balance, and a shock had restored it. What led to that brief period of darkness, what occurred during it, was to her like a troubled dream of which no connected story remained —only a reminiscence of pain and terror. She knew now that Anthony loved her, and there was peace in her soul. He loved her. She cared for nothing else.

That was to her everything. That he was in danger she knew. How he had got into it she did not dare to inquire. But one thought filled her mind and soul, displacing every other—he loved her.

It was so. Anthony did love her, and loved her alone. When he was away—in the camp, on the march, in the battlefield—his mind had turned to Urith and his home. Filled with anxiety about her from what he had heard from Mr. Crymes, he had become a prey to dispair; and, if he had fought in the engagement of Sedgemoor with desperate valour, it had been in the hopes of falling, for he believed that no more chance of happiness remained to him.

After his escape, an irresistible longing to see his Urith once more, and learn for certain how she was, and how she regarded him, had drawn him to Willsworthy. And now that she was restored to him in mind and heart, he stood, perhaps, in as great peril as at any time since he had joined the insurgents. He knew this, but was sanguine. The vast extent of the moor was before him, where he could hide for months, and it would be impossible for an enemy to surprise him. Where he then was, on the cliffs above the Tavy, he was safe, and safe within reach of home. No one could approach unobserved, and opportunities of escape lay ready on all sides—a thousand hiding-places among the piles of broken rock, and bogs that could be put between himself and a pursuer. Nevertheless, he could not remain for ever thus hiding. He must escape across the seas, as he was certain to be proscribed, and a *price set on* his head. That he must be with Urith

but for a day or two he was well aware, and every moment that she was with him was to him precious. She did not know this: she thought she had recovered him for ever, and he did not undeceive her.

Now he began to tell her of his adventures — of how he had joined the Duke, and been appointed Captain of the South Devon band; of how they had been received in Taunton; how they had marched to Bristol, and almost attacked it; and then of the disastrous day at Sedgemoor.

"Come!" said Anthony, "let us have a fire. With the mists of morning rising, the smoke from the hut will escape notice."

The air of morning was cold.

Holding Urith still to his side, he went with her into the hut. It was without furniture of any sort. Blocks of stones served as seats; but there was a crook over the hearth, and an iron pot hanging from it. A little collection of fuel stood in a corner—heather, furze-bushes, dry turf—that had been piled there by a shepherd in winter, and left unconsumed.

Urith set herself to work to make a fire and prepare. They were merry as children on a picnic, getting ready for a breakfast. Urith had brought up what she could in a basket from Willsworthy, and soon a bright and joy-inspiring fire was blazing on the hearth.

Anthony rolled a stone beside it and made Urith sit thereon, whilst he threw himself in the fern at her feet and held her hand. They talked, watching and feeding the fire, and expecting the pot to boil. They did not laugh much, they had no jokes with each other.

Love had ceased to be a butterfly, and was rather the honey-bearing bee, and the honey it brought was drawn out of the blossoms of sorrow.

To Urith it gave satisfaction to see how changed Anthony was from the spoiled, wayward, dissatisfied fellow who had thought only of himself, to a man resolute, tender, and strong. As she looked at him, pride swelled in her heart, and her dark eyes told what she felt. But a little time had passed over both their heads, and yet in that little while much had been changed in both. How much in herself she did not know, but she marked and was glad to recognize the change in him.

As they talked, intent in each other, almost unable to withdraw their eyes from each other, the door opened, and Mr. Solomon Gibbs entered.

"There!—there!" said he, "a pretty sharp watch you keep. You might have been surprised for aught of guard you kept."

"Come here," said Anthony; "sit by the fire and tell me what is being done below."

Mr. Solomon Gibbs shook his head. "You cannot remain here, Tony; you must be off—over the seas—and I will take care of Urith, and have the windows patched at Willsworthy."

"I know I must," said Anthony, gloomily, and he took Urith's hand and drew it round his neck; never had she been dearer to him than now, when he must part from her.

"Oh! uncle!" exclaimed Urith, "he must not indeed *go hence* now that he has returned to me."

"I am safe here for a while," said Anthony, and he pressed his lips to Urith's hand.

"Can you say that, with the rare look-out you keep?" asked Mr. Gibbs. Then he gazed into the fire, putting up his hand and scratching his head under the wig. He said no more for a minute, but presently, without looking at Anthony, he went on, "Those fellows under their Captain—Fogg is his name—are turning the place upside down; they have visited pretty nigh every house and hovel in quest of rebels, as they call them. The confounded nuisance is that they have a list of the young fellows who went from these parts. As fast as any of them come home, if they have escaped the battle, they drop into the hands of the troopers."

Anthony said nothing, he was troubled. Urith's large dark eyes were fixed on her uncle.

"The Duke of Monmouth has been taken, I hear; he hid in a field, in a ditch among the nettles. No chance for him. His Majesty, King James, will have no bowels of compassion for such a nephew. For the Protestants of England there is now no hope save in the Prince of Orange."

Then Uncle Solomon put his hand round behind Anthony and nudged him, so as not to attract the attention of Urith.

"And whilst we are waiting we may be consumed," said Anthony.

Then Solomon nudged Anthony again, and winked at him, and made a sign that he desired to have a word with him outside the door.

"'Fore Heaven, Tony!" said he, "we are careless as before. I who bade you keep a watch have forgotten myself in talking with you. Go forth, lad, and cast a look about thee."

Anthony rose from the fern, and went to the door. He stood in it a moment, looking from side to side, then closed the door, and went further.

Mr. Gibbs took off his wig and rubbed his head. "The mist in the valley has taken the curl out, Urith. I wish you would dry my wig by the blaze, and I will clap my hat on and go out and help Anthony to see from which quarter the wind blows, and whether against the wind mischief comes."

Then he also went forth.

Urith at once set herself to prepare the food for breakfast; her heart was heavy at the thought of losing Anthony again as soon as she had recovered him, when all the love of their first passion had re-bloomed with, if not greater beauty, yet with more vigour.

When Anthony re-entered the hut, he was alone, very pale, and graver than before; Urith saw him as he passed the ray of light that entered from one of the loop-holes, and she judged at once that some graver tidings had been given him than Uncle Sol had cared to communicate in her presence.

She uttered a half-stifled cry of fear, and started to her feet. "Oh, Anthony! What is it? Are the soldiers drawing near?"

"No, my darling, no one is in sight."

"But what is it then? Must I lose you? Must you *go from* hence?"

She threw herself on his breast and clung to him.

"Yes, Urith, I must go. You must be prepared to lose me."

"But I shall see you again—soon?"

"We shall certainly meet again."

She understood that he was no longer safe there, that he must fly further, and that she could not accompany him on his flight; but her heart could not reconcile itself to this conviction.

He spoke to her with great affection, he stroked her head, and kissed her, and bade her take courage and gather strength to endure what must be borne.

"But, Tony!—for how long?"

"I cannot say."

"And must you cross the seas?"

He hesitated before he answered. "I must go to a strange land," he replied, in a low tone, and bowed his head over hers. She felt that his hand that held her head was trembling. She knew it was not from fear, but from the agony of parting with her. She strove to master her despair when she saw what it cost him to say "Farewell" to her. If she might not share his fate, she could save it from being made more heavy and bitter by her tears and lamentations.

"Tony," she said, "you gave me that other half-token, take it again; hang it about your neck as a remembrance of me, and I will wear the other half—wherever we may be, you or I, it is to each only a half, a broken life, an imperfect life, and life can never be full or complete to either again till we meet."

"No," he said, and took the token, "no, only a half life till we meet."

He hung the ribbon round his neck, and placed the half token in his breast. Then he said:

"I must go at once, Urith. Come with me a part of the way. Uncle Sol will take you from me."

They left the hut together. Urith pointed to the food, but Anthony's appetite was gone. He drew her to his side, and so, silently, folded together with interlaced arms, they walked over the dewy short grass without speaking. After a while they reached a point where Solomon Gibbs was awaiting them, a point at which their several ways parted.

There Anthony stayed his feet. Overcome by her grief Urith again cast herself into his arms. He put his hands to her head and thrust it back, that he might look into her eyes.

"Urith!" he said.

"Yes, Anthony!" She raised her eyes to his.

He was pale as death.

"Urith, your forgiveness for all the sorrow I have caused you."

"Oh, Anthony!" she clung to him, quivering with emotion. "It is I—it is I—who must——"

"We have been neither of us free from blame. One kiss—a last—in token of perfect reconciliation."

A kiss that was long—which neither liked to conclude—but Anthony at length drew his lips away.

"We shall meet again," he said, "and then to part no more."

CHAPTER LVIII.

ON THE WAY TO DEATH.

ANTHONY had seen Urith for the last time. They would meet again only in Eternity. Though the moor was wide before him, and he was free to escape over it, yet he might not fly. Captain Fogg had taken his father prisoner, had conveyed him to Lydford Castle, which he had made his headquarters, and had given out that, unless Anthony Cleverdon the younger, the rebel, who had commanded the insurgent company from the neighbourhood of Tavistock, surrendered himself within twenty-four hours, he would hang the old man from the topmost window of the Castle keep.

This was the tidings that Mr. Solomon Gibbs had brought to Anthony. Mr. Gibbs made no comment on it, he left Anthony to act on what he heard unpersuaded by him, to sacrifice himself for his father, or else to let the old man suffer in his stead.

There could be little doubt that Squire Cleverdon had done his utmost to forfeit the love of his children.

All the unhappiness that had fallen on Anthony, Urith, and Bessie was due in chief measure to his pride and hardness of heart; nevertheless, the one great fact remained that he was the father of Anthony, and this fact constituted an ineradicable right over the son to exact of him that he should do his utmost to save the life of his father.

Moreover, the old man was guiltless of rebellion. Anthony's life was forfeit, because he had borne arms against his rightful Sovereign, and his father had not compromised his loyalty in any way. Anthony had never as a boy endured that a comrade should be punished for his faults, and could he now suffer his father to be put to death for the rebellious conduct of the son?

Not for one moment did Anthony hesitate as to his duty. But a struggle he did undergo. He thought of Urith. He had sinned against her, led astray by his vanity and love of flattery; and, after having suffered, he had worked his way to a right mind. And at the very moment of reunion, when his love and exultation over his recovered wife shot up like a flame—at that very moment he must pronounce his own sentence of death; at the moment that he had felt that she forgave him, and that all was clear for beginning a new and joyous life together, he must be torn from her, and exchange the pure and beautiful happiness just dawning on him for a disgraceful death, and the grave.

He knew that Urith's grief over his death would be intense, and, maybe, bring her down almost into the dust; but he knew, also, that the day would come when she would acknowledge that he had acted rightly, and then she would be proud of his memory. On the other hand, were he to allow his father to die in his room, he would remain for ever dishonoured in his own sight, disgraced before the world, and would lose the respect of his wife, and with loss of respect her love for him *would also go.*

The worst was over: he had bidden her farewell without betraying to her that the farewell was for ever. He took his way to Lydford, there to hand himself over to the Royal officers.

He had not left the moor, but was on the highway that crosses an outlying spur of it, when he suddenly encountered Julian Crymes.

Julian had heard of the return of Anthony before Captain Fogg and his soldiers arrived. She heard he was at Willsworthy, but he had not been to see her; and yet he had an excellent excuse for so doing—he must be able to tell her about her father. She had waited impatiently, hourly expecting him, and he had not come. She did not like to leave the house for a minute, lest he should come whilst she was away. Every step on the gravel called her to the window, every strange voice in the house caused her heart to bound. Why did not he come?

She went to the window of her little parlour and looked forth; and as she looked her hot, quick breath played over the glass, and in so doing brought out the interwoven initials "A" and "U." They had long ago faded, and yet under the breath they reappeared.

When she had heard a rumour of his return, the life blood had gushed scalding through her veins, her eye had flashed, and her cheek flamed with expectation. Her father was dead, but the sorrow she felt for his loss was swallowed up in the joy that Anthony was home and in safety. Now all was right again, and in glowing colours she imaged to herself their meeting. She could hardly contain the exultation within; yet her

reason told her that he could be no nearer to her than he was, he was still bound to Urith. The reproaches of Bess had stung her, but the sting was no longer felt when she heard that he was back.

But as she breathed on the window-pane, and first the interwoven initials "A" and "U" reappeared, and then the smirch where he had passed his hand over her own initials linked to his, it sent a curdle through her arteries. He came not near her. He loved her no more—he had forgotten her. Little by little the suspicion entered, and made itself felt, that he did not love her. It became a conviction, forming as an iron band about her heart, rivetted with every hour, firmer, contracting, becoming colder. She was too haughty to betray her feelings, and she had not suffered a question relative to Anthony to pass over her lips.

Then she heard that Captain Fogg had arrived, and was searching the neighbourhood for Anthony, and was arresting every returned insurgent. The Captain visited Kilworthy, and explored the house for treasonable correspondence, but found none.

The anxiety and alarm of Julian for the safety of Anthony became overmastering. She could no longer endure imprisonment in her own house. Moreover, there was now no need for her to remain there. Anthony was in hiding somewhere, or he was taken—she knew not which—and could not come to her.

She had not slept all night, and when morning dawned she rode forth, unattended, to obtain some tidings about him. She would not go to Willsworthy. She *could not* face Urith, but she would hover about

between Willsworthy and Hall, and wait till she could hear some news concerning him.

In this restless, anxious condition of mind, Julian Crymes was traversing the down when she lit on Anthony himself.

She greeted him with an exclamation of joy, rode up to him, sprang from her horse, and said, "But surely, Tony! this is reckless work coming on to the highway when they seek thy life."

"They will not have long to seek," said he.

"What do you mean?"

He made no answer, and strode forward to pass her, and continue his course to Lydford.

"Anthony!" exclaimed Julian, "you shall not meet and leave me thus. I have not seen you since your return."

"I cannot stay now."

"But you shall!" She threw herself in his road, holding the reins of her horse with one hand, and extending her whip in the other. "Anthony! what is the meaning of this?"

"I must pass," said he, stepping aside to circumvent her.

"Anthony!" she cried—there was pain and despair in her tone—"where are you going? and why will you not speak to me?"

He stood still for a moment, and looked steadily at her; then she saw how pale he was.

"Julian," he said, quietly, "you have acted towards me in a heartless——"

"Heartless, Tony!"

"In an utterly cruel manner, and have brought me to this. It was you who sowed the seeds of strife between Urith and me; you who drove her off her mind; you who forced me to leave home and go to the standard of the Protestant Duke; and it is you now who bring me to the gallows."

"The gallows!"

"The captain at the head of the troopers has taken my father, and threatens to hang him within a day unless I surrender to the same fate."

"But, Anthony!" She could hardly speak, she was trembling, and her colour flying about her face like storm-driven cloudlets lit by a setting sun, red and threatening. "Anthony!—not to—to death!"

"To death, Julian!"

She uttered a cry, let go the bridle, dropped her whip, and ran to him with extended arms. "Anthony! —Oh, Anthony!"

He put forth his hand and held her from him. No; on his breast where his Urith had just lain, that should never be touched by another—not by such another as Julian Crymes.

"Stand back," he said, sternly.

"Anthony! say you love me! You know you have —have always loved me."

"I never loved you, Julian. No—never."

She shook herself free, drew back, pressed her clenched fists against her bosom. "You dare to tell me that—you!"

"I never loved you," he said.

Her face became white as that of a corpse. She drew on one side and said, "Go — and may you be hanged! I hate you. I would I were by to see you die."

CHAPTER LIX.

A LAST CHANCE.

JULIAN was left alone. She watched Anthony depart, till he had disappeared round a turn of the road and a fall of the hill; then she cast herself upon the heather in a paroxysm of agony. She drove her fingers into the bushes of dwarf gorse, and the needles entered her flesh and drew the blood; but she heeded it not. The rough heather was against her cheek, a storm of sobs and tears shook and wetted the harsh, dry flowers. He did not love her! He never had loved her! She had fought against this conviction that, like a cold, gliding snake, had stolen into her heart and dripped its poison there.

Now she could resist it no more. It was not told her by Bessie—it was not a new conjecture formed on certain scribblings on the glass; it had been proclaimed by his own lips, and at a solemn moment when he would not lie—when he was on his way to death.

He had trifled with her heart, and he dared to reproach her! She had loved him before ever he had known Urith, and then he had shown her attention. Had she mistaken that attention for love? Had not

her own flaming passion seen in the reflection it called up in him a real reciprocal flame?

After he was married she could not hide from her conscience that she had made a struggle to win back his heart—had disregarded the counsels of prudence and the teachings of religion in the furious resistance she had offered to the established fact that he had been given to another, and belonged to that other.

He did not love her! He never had loved her! And his life had been to her precious only because she loved him, and believed that he loved her.

She drew herself up in the heather; her cheeks were flaming, scratched by the heather branches, and her hair dishevelled. Her great dark eyes were like a storm-cloud full of rain, and yet with fire twinkling and flashing out of it. He was on his way to death. He would be no more in this life to be fought for, to be won by her or by Urith.

"I am glad he is going to die!" she cried, and laughed. Then she threw herself again on the ground in another convulsive fit of sobs.

Urith had won. She—Julian, had dared her to the contest for the prize. Each had come off ill; but Urith had gained the object—gained it only to lose it—won Anthony's heart, only to have it broken as her own brain was broken.

"It is well!" moaned Julian, catching at the tufts of heath and tearing at them, but unable either to break them or root them up. "It is well! I would never have suffered her to regain him. I would have killed her!"

Rage and disappointment tore her, as the evil spirit tore the possessed under Tabor, and finally left her, exhausted and sick at heart. A cool air came down off the moor and fanned her hot cheek, and dried the tears that moistened them.

A few hours—perhaps only an hour—and Anthony would be dead. She saw the gallows set up below Lydford Castle, and Anthony brought forth, in his shirt; his eyes bandaged; his hands bound behind his back. She heard the voices of the soldiers, and the hum of compassion from the bystanders. She saw the rope fastened about his neck, and cast over the crosstree of the gallows. Then one of the soldiers leaped, and caught the free end of the rope, and began to haul at it. Julian uttered a cry of horror, struggled to her knees, clasped her palms over her eyes, as though to shut out a real sight from them, and swayed herself to and fro on her knees.

The black kerchief, with the jerk, fell from his eyes, and he looked at her. Julian threw up her hands to heaven, and screamed, with horror, "My God; save him!"

Then she saw, indistinctly, through her tears, and out of her horror-distended eyes, some one standing before her. She could not see who it was; but, overmastered by her terror, she cried, "Save him! Save him!"

"Julian!" said a voice; and it had a composing effect at once on her disordered feelings.

"Bess! Oh, Bess! is that you? Oh, Bessie! Do you know? He has given himself up. Anthony! An-

thony!" She cowered no more; her bosom laboured, and she bowed herself, with her head in her lap, and wept again.

Bessie put her hand under her arm, and raised her.

"Stand up, Julian. I did not know it; but I was quite sure he would do this. I am glad he has. It was right."

"Bess, you are glad?"

"It is like himself; he has done right. He is my own dear, dear Anthony."

"Oh, Bess!—such a death!"

"The death does not dishonour; to live would have dishonoured. He has done right."

"He has betrayed my love!" gasped Julian, "and I should be glad he died, yet—I cannot bear it. Indeed —indeed, I cannot. Oh, Bess! I would that it were I who was to die—not he. Bess! will they take me and let him go? He has been false to me, and I am true to him."

"He has not been false to you," said Bessie; "he has come to a sense of the wrong course he was engaged in, into which you drew him. But he never was false to you, for he never cared for you. Come! poor unhappy girl. I know how full of sorrow you must be—so must all who love Tony."

"But, Bess! is there no way of saving him?"

Elizabeth shook her head, and said:

"I do not suppose so. It is true that Gloine has got off, and there is a whisper that his uncle saw the captain, and some money passed, but——"

"Oh! if money were all——"

"But, remember, Gloine was only a common soldier, and Anthony was the captain who led the men from these parts. I do not think any money could save him."

"Let us try." Julian sprang to her feet.

"Where is money to be had? Enough, I mean. You know the state we are in."

"But Fox has it."

"Fox!" Bessie considered; then, turning colour, said, "I do not think that even to save Anthony's life I would ask a favour of Fox."

"Then I will. He can and must save Anthony. Where is he?"

"At Hall! He has gone over there; that is why I left, and I was on my way to Willsworthy when I saw your horse; I caught him by the bridle, I knew whose it was, and came in search of you. I feared some accident. But, Julian, I am very certain nothing can be done for Anthony, save by our prayers. I have heard that special orders were issued that he was to be hung. The captain came here on purpose to take and execute him. He cannot, he dare not spare him."

"Oh, Bess!—we will try!"

"Prayer alone can avail," said Bessie, sadly.

"Come with me. Come back to Hall. You must be with me. I will see Fox. He alone can help us."

"I will go with you," said Bessie. "But I know that it is hopeless."

"He must be saved. He must not die!" gasped Julian.

She remounted her horse, mechanically, and Bessie walked at her side.

Julian said no more. She was a prey to conflicting emotions. A little while ago she had wished Anthony's death, and now she was seeking to save it. If she did succeed in saving it, it was for whom? Not for herself. He did not love her—he never had loved her. For Urith—for her rival, her enemy! She knew that Urith was in a strange mental condition. She did not know that she was recovered from it. But she gave no heed to the state in which Urith was. She thought of her as she had seen her, handsome, sullen, defiant. That was the girl Anthony had preferred to herself, and she would save Anthony to give him to the arms of Urith, that Urith might take him by the neck, and cover his face with kisses, and weep tears of joy on his breast. Julian set her teeth. Better that he should die than this! But, next moment, her higher nature prevailed. She had loved Anthony—she did love Anthony—and true love is unselfish. She must forget herself, her own wrongs, real or imagined, and do her utmost for him. How could she love him, and let him die an ignominious death? How could she let him die, when, by an effort, she might save him, and bear to live an hour longer? She would feel as though his blood lay at her door.

"Bessie, I cannot stay. You walk. I must ride on as fast as I can. Time must not be wasted. Every moment is important."

Then she struck her horse, and galloped in the direction of Hall. Her hair, wild and tangled, flew about her ears. Her hands were full of gorse-spikes, and every pressure on the bridle made the pain great,

but she did not regard this. Her mind was tossed with waves of contrary feeling, and yet, as in a storm, when the surges seem to roll in every direction, there is yet a prevailing set, so was it now. There had been a conflict in her heart, but her nobler, truer nature had won the day.

As she drew up in the courtyard of Hall, Fox came out, and uttered an exclamation of surprise at seeing her.

He was in a high condition of excitement. Without waiting to hear her speak, he burst forth into a torrent of complaint.

"I will have the law of them—soldiers though they be, and with a search-warrant, they are not entitled to rob—we have been treated as though we were foreigners, and subjected to all the violence of a sack. They have torn open every cupboard, broken into every drawer and cabinet, thrown the books and letters about —I can find nothing, and what is worst, I cannot lay my hands on the money. To-morrow is the last day, to-morrow the mortgage must be paid, and I know that my father-in-law had some coin in the house. By the Lord! I wonder whether he had the wit to secrete it somewhere, or left it where any plunderer would go straight in quest of it. And he is to be hanged in an hour, and I cannot ask him."

"Fox, it is not true; Master Cleverdon escapes."

"I know he will be hanged, and I do not suppose that set of ruffians will let me see him and find out where the money is. I have searched everywhere, and found nothing but broken cabinets and overturned

drawers, account-books, title-deeds, letters, bills, all in confusion along with clothing. It drives me mad. And —unless the money be forthcoming to-morrow, Hall is lost. I have heard that the agent of the Earl of Bedford will offer a price for it—and that there is like to be another offer from Sir John Morris. They would out-bid me. The mortgage must be paid, or Hall lost, and if the old man be hanged to-day, Hall is mine by this evening. It will drive me crazed—where can the money be? He was fool enough for anything—to put it in his cabinet, or in a box under his bed, or in the chimney, tied in an old nightcap like as would have done any beldame. If he has done that—then the soldiers have taken it. Who was to interfere? Who to observe them? They drove all the servants out. They took the Squire in custody, and I was not here. I was at Kilworthy, as you know."

"Fox," said Julian. "It is no matter to me whether Hall be saved or lost. Anthony has surrendered, and the Squire is free."

"Anthony surrendered!" Fox fell back and stared at her, then laughed. "'Fore heaven! we live in crack-brained times when folks take a delight in running their heads into nooses. There was my father did his best to get hung, drawn, and quartered. A merciful Providence sent him into the other world with a bullet in his heart, and saved the honour of the family, and made a more easy exit for him. And now there is Tony—runs to the gibbet as though to a May-dance! Verily! there are more fools than hares. For them you *must hide* the snare, for the fools expose it, cross-piece,

loop, and rope, and all complete, and ring a bell and call—come and be hanged! Come!"

"Fox, we must save Anthony."

"Save him? Why, he will not be saved! He had the world before him, and he might have run where he would; now he has gone where he ought not, and must take the consequences. Save him! Let him be hanged. I want his father. I want to know what money he has, and where it is. I can't find the whole amount. I know he has, or had, some hundreds of sovereigns somewhere."

"Fox, you must assist me to save Anthony; we cannot let him die. I will not! I will not! He must not die!" Her passion overcame her, and she burst into tears.

"Pshaw! He is past salvation. If he is in the hands of Captain Fogg, he is in a trap that has shut on him and will not let him go. Besides—nothing can be done."

"Yes, there can. Gloine escaped. His uncle, the rich old yeoman at Smeardon, bought him off."

"No money will buy Anthony off. Besides, where is the money the come from?"

"You have some. Fogg let off Gloine, and he will let Anthony off if he be paid a sufficient sum. If he was a rascal in small game, he will be a rascal in great."

"I do not care to have Tony escape; I owe him a grudge. Besides, and that is just as well, his father is not here; what money the old fellow has is hidden in some corner or other, where I cannot find it,

unless it has been carried off by those vultures, those rats."

"If this is not available you must help."

"I! pshaw! I cannot, and I will not."

"You can; you have a large sum at your disposal."

Fox turned mottled in face. He stared at his sister with an uneasy look in his eye.

"What makes you suppose that?" he said. "It is a folly; it is not true. I am poor as the yellow clay of North Devon. No small sum would serve, and I have but a couple of groats and a crown in my pouch."

"You have the money; you yourself admitted it, two minutes ago. You said that if you could find the money Squire Cleverdon had laid by, you would be able to make up the rest."

"Oh! that was talk! I would mortage my Buckland estate."

"You have the money. Fox, this is evasive."

"What will satisfy you? Here is a crown, and here two groats, and, by Heaven—there is a penny as well. Take this and go—try your luck with Captain Fogg."

"I will have nothing under five hundred pounds. Fox, you can help me, and you will."

"I have not the coin. If I had I would not spare it. I will not throw Hall away. What is Tony to me? If he puts his neck into the noose, who is to blame if the rope be pulled and he dangles? No; here is the extent of my help—a crown, two groats, and one penny."

"Fox! I will sell you all my rights in Kilworthy. I will make over to you everything I have there—land, house—all—all—if you will give me five hundred pounds in gold."

Fox looked down, considered, then shook his head.

"There is not time for it. By the time we had got the transfer engrossed and signed, all would be over. Fogg won't let the grass grow under his feet, nor the rope rot for lack of usage. No; if there were time, I might consider your offer; but, as there is not, I will not. Let Tony hang: it is his due. He ran his head into the loop."

"Your final answer is—you will not help?"

"To the extent of one crown, two groats, and a penny."

"Then, Fox, I shall help myself."

CHAPTER LX.

EXIT "ANTHONY CLEVERDON."

Old Squire Cleverdon had spent the night in Lydford Castle. The Castle was more than half ruinous; nevertheless, there were habitable rooms still in it, one or two of these served as prison cells. The walls were damp, and the glass in the windows broken; but it mattered not, he had but that night longer for earth, and the season was summer.

The Squire did not lose his gravity of deportment. He had held up his head before the world when things

went well with him; he would look the world defiantly in the face as all turned against him. He knew that he must die. He did not entertain a hope of life; it may almost be said that he was indifferent whether he lived or died. His only grievance was that the manner of his death would be ignominious. It was hardly likely that the news of his capture and of Captain Fogg's threat should reach Anthony. Where his son was he did not know, but he supposed that he had taken refuge in the heart of the wilderness of moors, and how could he there receive tidings of what menaced his father. Or, if the news did reach him, almost certainly it would reach him when too late to save his father? But, supposing he did hear, and in time, what was menaced, was it likely that he would give himself up for the sake of his father? His life was the more valuable of the two; it was young and fresh, he had a wife dependent on him, he had an estate—his wife's—to live on; and the old man was near the end of his natural term of life, was friendless, he had cast from him his children, and was acreless, he had lost his patrimony. Anthony would be a fool to give himself up in exchange for his father. What did the Squire care for the scrap of life still his? So little that he had been ready to throw it away; and if the mode of passage into eternity was ignominious, why it was the very method he had chosen for himself at the sawpit. He was an aged ruined man, who had failed in everything, and had no place remaining for him on earth. He did not ask himself whether he had been blameworthy in his con*duct* to his children, in his behaviour to Anthony. He

slept better that night in Lydford Castle than he had for many nights, but woke early, and saw the dawn break over the peaks of the moor to the east. He would not be brought before the captain and sent to execution for a few more hours. From his cell he had heard and been disturbed by the riot and revelry kept up by the captain and some boon comrades till late.

The morning was well advanced when Julian Crymes rode to the Castle gates, followed by a couple of serving men and laden horses. At her command the men removed the valises from the backs of the beasts and threw them over their own shoulders. The weight must have been considerable, judging by the way in which the men walked under their burdens.

Julian asked for admittance. She would see Captain Fogg. The sergeant at the gate hesitated.

"Captain Fogg was at Kilworthy yesterday in search of papers—my father's papers. I have found them, and bring them to him—correspondence that is of importance."

The sergeant ascended to the room where was the captain, and immediately came down again with orders for the admission of Julian.

Followed by the men, she mounted the stone flight that led to the upper storey, where Captain Fogg had taken up his quarters, and bade the servants lay their valises on the table and withdraw.

Captain Fogg sat at the table with a lieutenant at his side; he was engaged on certain papers, which he looked hastily over, as handed to him by the lieutenant, and scribbled his name under them.

Julian had time to observe the captain; he was a man of middle height, with very thick light eyebrows, no teeth, a blotched, red face, and a nose that gave sure indication of his being addicted to the bottle. He wore a sandy scrubby moustache and beard, so light in colour as not to hide his coarse purple lips. When he did look up, his eyes were of the palest ash colour, so pale as hardly to show any colour beside the flaming red of his face, and they had a watery and languid look in them. His appearance was anything but inviting.

He took no notice of Julian, but continued his work with a sort of sulky impatience to have it over.

Not so the young officer, who looked at Julian, and was struck with her beauty. He turned his eyes so often upon her that he forgot what he was about, and Fogg had to call him to order. Then Fogg condescended to observe Julian.

"Well," said he, roughly, "what do you want? Are these papers? What is your name?"

"I sent up my name," answered Julian.

"Ah! to be sure—the daughter of that rebel. I know—I know. What do you want?"

"I have come to ask the life of Anthony Cleverdon," she answered. "He does not deserve death: it was all my fault that he joined the Duke. He was no rebel at heart; but I drove him to it. See what a man he is—to come and surrender himself in order to save his old father from death."

"Bah! A rebel! He commanded—a chief rebel! He shall die," answered Fogg, roughly.

"I implore you to spare him! Take my life if you will. It was all my doing. But for me he never would have gone. I sent him from his home—I drove him into the insurgent ranks. I alone—I alone am guilty."

"And who are you that you plead for him so vehemently?" asked the Captain, his watery eye resting insolently on her beautiful, flushed face. "Are you his wife?"

"No—no; I am not."

"Ah, you are his sweetheart."

Julian's colour changed. "He does not love me. He is innocent, therefore I would buy his life."

"Buy!" echoed the Captain.

"Yes—buy it."

"It cannot be done. It is forfeit. In a quarter of an hour he dies! Look here, pretty miss: I have my orders. He is to die. I am a soldier: I obey orders. He dies."

He put his hand to his cravat and drew it upwards. The action showed how Anthony was to die.

"I have brought you here something worthy of your taking," said Julian, lowering her voice — "documents of the highest value. Documents, letters, and lists—what you have been looking for, and worth more than a poor lad's life. What is his body to you when you have driven out of it the soul? A cage without a bird. Here, in these valises, I have something of much more substantial value."

"Let me look," said Fogg.

"By heaven!" he swore, after he had leaned across the table and taken hold of one. "Weighty matters herein."

Julian gave him the key, and he opened; but not fully. Some suspicion of the contents seemed to have crossed his mind. He peered in and observed bags tied up.

"Ah!" said he. "State secrets—State secrets only for those in the confidence of the Government. Friswell!" he turned to the lieutenant, "leave me alone for a few minutes with this good maiden. She has matters of importance to communicate that concern many persons high up—high up—and young ears like yours must not hear. Wait till you have earned the confidence of your masters."

The lieutenant left the room.

Then Captain Fogg signed to the soldiers at the door to stand without as well.

"So—matters of importance concerning the Government," said Fogg. "In confidence, tell me all—I mean about these valises and their contents."

"I have come here," said Julian, "to implore you to save the life of Anthony Cleverdon. I am come with five hundred guineas, some in silver, some in gold —some in five-guinea pieces, the rest in guineas; they are yours freely and heartily, if you will but grant me the life of your prisoner."

"Five hundred guineas!" exclaimed the Captain; and his pale eyes watered, and his cheeks became redder. "Let me look."

He thrust his hand into the saddle-bag before him on the table, and drew forth a canvas bag that was tied and sealed. He cut the string and ran out some *five-guinea pieces* on the table. A five-guinea piece

was an attractive—a beautiful coin. James I. had struck thirty-shilling pieces, and Charles I. three-pound gold pieces, but the five-guinea coin had been first issued by Charles II. Noble milled coins, with the shields arranged across and each crowned, on the reverse. Captain Fogg took three in his hand, tossed them, rubbed one with his glove, put his hand into the bag and drew forth more.

"Five hundred guineas!" he said. "Upon my soul, it is more than the cock-sparrow is worth. I wish I could do it. By the Lord, I wish I could. Give me up that other bag."

Julian moved another over the table to him.

"Why," said he, "what do you reckon it all weighs?"

"I cannot say for certain; the money is not all in gold, there is much in silver as well."

"Silver! all well; but mostly gold. Why, how come you by so much down here? You country gentry must be well off to put by so much; and all coins of his late Majesty. You may have been nipped and scraped under Old Noll, but under the King you have thriven. Five hundred pounds! Where the foul fiend did you get it? You have not robbed the Exchequer?"

Julian made no answer.

The Captain continued to examine, rub, weigh, and try the coins; he ranged them in rows before him, he heaped them in piles under his nose.

"Upon my word, I never was more sorry in my life," he said. "But I can't do it. My orders are peremptory. If I do not hang him I shall get into trouble myself. But I'll tell you what I'll do—give him

a silk sash, a soldier's sword-sash, and hang him in that. It's another thing altogether—quite respectable. Will that do?" After a pause:—

"Now look at me," said the Captain; "it is cursed unpleasant and scurvy treatment we gentlemen of the sword meet with. I know very well that such prisoners as we deliver over to be dealt with by the law, supposing they be found guilty and sentenced to transportation or death, will be given the chance of buying off. Why, I've known it done for ten or fifteen pounds. Look at me and wonder! Ten or fifteen pounds into the pocket of this one or that—maybe a Lady-in-Waiting. But here be I—an honest, blunt, downright soldier, and five hundred guineas, and many of them five-guinea pieces, too, that smile in one's face as innocent as a child, and as inviting as a wench, and, by my soul! I can't finger them. Orders are peremptory, I must hang him. 'Tis enough to make angels weep!"[1]

He wiped his watery eyes.

"By the Majesty of the King, I'll do my best for you, saving my honour. I'll hang the old man, the father, and let the young one go free."

"Sir," said Julian, "Anthony will never accept life on those terms."

"Then, by my sword and spurs, I can't help you!

[1] This was the case. Among those sentenced by Judge Jeffreys, the majority escaped with a payment. The Queen had 98 delivered to her order, Jerome Nimo had 101, Sir Wm. Booth 195, Sir Christopher Musgrave 100, Sir Wm. Howard 205, and so on. They paid sums varying in amount, and got off clear. *See Inderwick's* "Sidelights on the Stuarts," 1889.

But I'll do what I can for you—I will, upon my soul! I'll make him dead drunk before I hang him. Will that do? Then he won't feel. Not a bit. He'll go off asleep, and wake in kingdom come, as easy as if he were rocked in a cradle. No unpleasantness at all, and I'll stand the liquor. He shall have what he likes. By Heaven, they're making noise enough outside! Here, help to put this money into the valise. I will call to order."

He set to work and pocketed as many five-guinea pieces as he could, then thrust the rest into the bags.

Having assumed a grave manner, he knocked with the hilt of his sword on the table, and roared to the sentinel to open the door.

He was at once answered. The commotion without had not ceased.

"I will go in. I insist!—I must see Captain Fogg!"

"Who is without?" asked the Captain. "Who is that creating such an uproar?"

"It is some one who desires to be admitted into your presence, Captain," said the Lieutenant. "He says he has been robbed; he claims redress."

"I can't see him—I am busy—— State secrets? Very well, let him in."

He changed his order as Fox burst into the room in spite of the efforts of the sergeant and sentinel to stay him.

"Who are you? What do you here?" asked Fogg. "Stand back. Guard, hold his hands. Take him into custody. What is the meaning of this?"

"I have been robbed," said Fox, his face stream-

ing with sweat and red with heat. "I have had my money taken; she has brought it here; she is trying to bribe you with it; she would buy off that fellow; he deserves to be hung. I will denounce you if you take the money; it is mine. You have come here to hang him, and hanged he shall be. You shall not take my money and let him escape." He gasped for breath; he had been galloping, and galloping in a state of feverish excitement and rage. Some time after Julian had left him at Hall, her final remark had occurred to him, "Then I shall help myself," and he asked himself what she could mean by that, what she possibly could do.

Suddenly he remembered his doubts about whether she had seen him in the pigeon-cote, and at once he was overwhelmed with fear. He mounted his horse and rode to Kilworthy, to hear that his sister had left an hour before with servants and horses. He flew to the dove-cote and explored the pigeon-holes. Every one had been rifled. Sick, almost fainting with dismay, with baffled avarice and ambition, he remounted his horse, and rode at its fastest pace to Lydford.

"You are an impudent scoundrel," said Captain Fogg; "an impudent scoundrel to dare insinuate—but, who are you, what is your name?"

"I am Anthony Crymes of Kilworthy," said Fox.

"It is a lie!" exclaimed Julian, starting forward. "Captain Fogg, take him, if you must have a victim. Take him. He is Anthony Cleverdon, son of the old Squire, and heir to Hall."

"*What* is that?—what is that? Clear the room,"

shouted Fogg. "Stand back you rascal!—traitor!—rebel! Sergeant, keep hold of him till you can get a pair of manacles—or stay, take your sash, bind his hands behind his back, and leave the room. Friswell, you need not stay; I will call you when wanted. Matters of State importance, secrets against the Government and his sacred Majesty the King, are not for ears such as yours—till tried, tried and proved worthy. Go."

When the room was cleared of all save Julian and Fox, the Captain said, "Now then, what is the meaning of this?"

"I have been robbed," said Fox, trembling between apprehension and rage. "My sister has taken advantage of having seen where I keep my money, and has carried it off—therewith to bribe you to let off"—he turned fiercely at Julian, his white teeth shining, his lips drawn back, and his eyes glittering with hate—"to let off—her lover."

"You are quite mistaken," said Fogg, stroking his moustache. "These saddle-bags and valises contain documents of importance, correspondence of the rebels——"

"They contain my money," screamed Fox—"five hundred pounds."

"Five hundred guineas," said the Captain, and thrust his hand into his pocket, "and some of them five-guinea pieces?"

"Even so. They are mine."

"And you are——?"

"Anthony Crymes. Most people know me as Fox Crymes."

"Captain Fogg," said Julian, "that is false. I do not deny that he was once called Crymes, but he obtained a royal license to change his name, he is Anthony Cleverdon."

"Anthony Cleverdon!" echoed Captain Fogg. "By the Lord, you seem to be a breed of Anthony Cleverdons down here! How many more of you are there?"

"There are three," said Julian—"the father, the old Squire; there is his son, an outcast, driven by his father from his home; and there is the son, Anthony Cleverdon of Hall, who has assumed the name, stepped into the rights and place of the others and walks in his shoes."

"And, by Heaven!—why not wear his cravat? You swear to this."

"I will swear."

"Come—I must have another to confirm your word."

"Call up the old father, if he be not already discharged."

Fox for a moment was stunned. He realized his danger. He had run his head into the noose prepared for Anthony, and that five hundred pounds had saved Anthony and sold him.

The paralysing effect of this discovery lasted but for a moment. Then he burst forth into a torrent of explanation, confused, stuttering in his rage and fear, now in a scream, then in a hoarse croak.

Captain Fogg rapped on the table.

"Gag him," ordered he, "stop his mouth. We have made a mistake—locked up the wrong man. This is

the veritable Anthony Cleverdon, the rebel. Stop his mouth instantly. He deafens me."

Fox—writhing, plunging, kicking, struggling to be free—was quickly overmastered, his mouth gagged, his feet bound as well as his hands. He stood snorting, his eyes glaring, the sweat pouring from his brow, and his red hair bristling.

In another moment old Squire Cleverdon was introduced, looking deadly pale. He had not been released—had not as yet heard that his son had delivered himself up. He looked about him with indifference. He believed he was brought up to receive sentence, and he was prepared to receive it with dignity.

"Old man," said the Captain, "a word with you. Friswell, you may stay. Sergeant, keep at the door. I want a short and direct answer to a question I put to you. Prisoner, do you know that fellow there, with his hair on end and his mouth stopped?"

"I know him very well. I have good reason to know him," answered the Squire.

"What is his name?"

"His name is the same as mine—Anthony Cleverdon."

"And his place of residence?"

"Hall."

"Is he your son?"

"He is my son-in-law; he——"

"Enough. He is your son?"

"Yes; that is to say——"

"Exactly," interrupted Captain Fogg. "I want to

hear no more; the lady says the same. Say it again. This is your assert——"

"Anthony Cleverdon, the younger, of Hall," said Julian.

"Sergeant," said Fogg, "is the beam run out?"

"Yes, your honour."

"And the rope ready?"

"It is, your honour."

"Then take this prisoner—Anthony Cleverdon the younger—and hang him forthwith. The two other prisoners are discharged. They were apprehended, or gave themselves up, by mistake. That is the true Anthony Cleverdon. Hang him—at once. He who steps into another man's shoes may wear as well his cravat."

CHAPTER LXI.

EXEUNT—OMNES.

ANTHONY was in his cell. He expected every moment to be called forth, and to hear his doom. He was perfectly calm, and thought only of Urith. He had the half-token about his neck, and he kissed it. Urith had given it to him: it was a pledge to him that she would ever be heartaching for him, living in the love and thought of him. Time passed without his noticing it.

Steps approached his cell, and he rose from his seat, ready to follow the soldier who would lead him forth to death. But, to his astonishment, in the door

appeared Julian, with the lieutenant. Anthony's face darkened, and he stepped back. Why should this girl —this girl who had poisoned his life—come to torment and disturb him at the last hour?

Perhaps she read his thoughts in his face by the pale ray of light that entered from the window; and, in a voice trembling with emotion, she said, "Anthony, you are free!"

He did not stir, but looked questioningly at her. She also was pale, deadly pale, and her whole frame was quivering.

"It is true," said Friswell. "You are free to depart, you and the old man; both are discharged. There has been a mistake."

"I do not understand. There can have been no mistake," said Anthony.

"Come, quick; follow me," said Julian. Then, in a low tone, turning to the lieutenant, she said, "Suffer me one moment to speak to him alone."

"You may speak to him as much as you will," said the young man. "I only wish I were in his place."

"Anthony," said she, "say not another word to any one here. I have delivered you."

"You, Julian! But how?"

"I have bought your life, with gold and——"

"And with what?"

"With——but I will tell you outside, not here. Come, your father awaits you."

"I thank you for what you have done for me, Julian. If I have wronged you in any way hitherto, I

ask your forgiveness. Indeed, we have been in the wrong on all sides—none clear, none—save Bessie."

"None, save Bessie," repeated Julian.

"Come with me," she added, after a silence; and he obeyed.

Near the castle stands the weather-beaten church of St. Petrock, with its granite-pinnacled tower. Outside this church, on a tombstone, sat the old Squire. He first had been released, not at all comprehending how he had escaped death; not allowed to ask questions, huddled out of the castle, and sent forth into the street, bewildered and in doubt.

Now, with wide-opened eyes, he stared at Julian and his son as they came to him, as though he saw spirits from the dead.

"He is free, he is restored to you!" said Julian. The old man tried to rise, but sank back on the stone, extended his arms, and in a moment was locked in those of his son.

He could not understand what had taken place. He knew only that both he and Anthony were free, and in no further danger, but how that had come about, and how it was that Fox was in bonds, he could not make out. The reaction after the strain on his nerves set in. Great tears rolled out of his eyes, and he sobbed like a child on the breast of Anthony.

Then Julian told him how that his son had come and had surrendered himself to save his father. The old man listened, and as he listened, his pride, his hardness gave way. He put his hand into that of his

son and pressed it. He could not speak, his heart was overfull.

But how had Anthony escaped? That he could not understand.

Then Julian told how that she had discovered that Fox had a hidden store of gold in the pigeon-cote at Kilworthy. She was convinced that this was the money that her father had lost, the money he was conveying to Monmouth at Taunton. Fox must have robbed the coach, robbed his own father, secreted the bags near the place where he had stolen them, and conveyed them by night, one by one, to the pigeon-house at Kilworthy, where he had supposed they were safe, as the cote was deserted and no one ever entered it, least of all ascended a ladder to explore the pigeon-holes. She, by accident, had observed him, but had not allowed him to suppose that he had been seen.

When Anthony gave himself up, then Julian had entreated Fox to use this money to obtain the freedom of his friend and brother-in-law. As he had refused to do so, Julian had gone home, and taken the gold, brought it to Lydford, and with it had purchased Anthony's freedom.

As they spoke, the sexton passed them, rattling the keys of the church. He took no notice of them, nor they of him. They, indeed, were immersed in their own concerns.

"But," said Anthony, "you said something more to me. You had sacrificed something for me besides the gold. What was it——?"

"A life," answered Julian, in a low tone.

Hark! as she said the word, the bell of the church began to toll.

"There is some one dying," said the old man, rising from the gravestone. "Let us pray for him as he passes."

There was a noise of voices in the street, exclamations, heard between the deep deafening notes of the bell.

Presently the old man said. "What did you say, Julian! A life—whose life?"

She did not answer. He looked round. She was gone.

"And what did the Captain mean," he added, "when he said—he who has stepped into another man's shoes must wear his cravat?"

As he looked about, searching for Julian—he saw his question answered; understood why the bell tolled, why the whole of the population of the little place was in the street, talking, gesticulating, crying out, and looking at the topmost window of the Castle.

He who had stepped into Anthony's shoes, assumed his name, occupied his place, was wearing the cravat intended for his neck.

But where was Julian?

That was a question asked often, repeatedly, urgently, and it was a question that was never answered.

A shepherd boy declared that he had seen her going over the moor in the direction of Tavy Cleave. Search was made for her in every direction, but in vain.

When the writer was a boy, he was with a party at a picnic at Tavy Cleave, and was bidden descend the precipitous flank to the river to bring up water in an iron kettle. He went down—jumping, sliding, scrambling, and suddenly slid through a branch of whortleberry plants between some masses of rock that had fallen together, wedging each other up, and found himself in a pit under these rocks. To his surprise he there found a number of bones. His first impression was that a sheep had fallen from the rocks into this place, and had there died, but a little further examination convinced him that the remains were not those of a sheep at all. Among the remains, where were the little bones of the hand, was a ring. The ring was of gold and delicately wrought. It probably at one time contained hair, but this had disappeared, and the socket was empty, within the hoop was engraved "Ulalia Crymes, d. April 6, 1665." It was clearly a mourning ring. Now Ulalia Glanville was the last of that family, the heiress who married Ferdinando Crymes, and the day of her burial was April 10th, therefore, probably she died about April 6th in that very year, 1665. And this was the mother of Julian. Can this have been the ring commemorative of her mother worn by Julian Crymes, and does this fact identify the bones as the remains of that unhappy girl? If so she must have either fallen or precipitated herself from the rocks over head, and dropped between these masses of stone, where her crushed body escaped the observation of all searchers, and of accidental passers-by.

As already stated in an earlier chapter, the parish

church of Peter Tavy has gone through that process which is facetiously termed "restoration," on the principle of the derivation of *Lucus a non lucendo;* restoration meaning, in ninety-nine out of a hundred cases at all events, in Cornwall first, and Devon after—the utter destruction of every element of interest and loveliness in an ancient church. Among the objects on which one of those West of England wreckers, the architects, exhibit their destructive energies are the tombstones.

Now, in Peter Tavy Church, previous to its restoration, there were—in the interest of my story—two tombstones, fortunately transcribed before the wrecker began his work.

Here is one, cut on a slate slab let into the floor:—

"To the Memory of

ANTHONY CLEVERDON, Gent.,

[*Then a pair of clasped right hands*]

and URITH, his Wife,

Daughter and Heiress of

RICHARD MALVINE, of Willsworthy, Gent."

Under this stone the corps of them abide
What lived and tenderly did love, and dyed.
Wedlock and Death had with the Grave agreed
To make for them an everlasting marriage bed,
Where in repose their mixed dust might lye.
Their souls be gone up hand in hand on high.

Curiously enough, there was no date to this tomb.

It would appear that for a hundred years the descendants of Anthony and Urith remained at Willsworthy, and then the family became extinct. It would also appear that Hall passed completely out of the family of Cleverdon, the old Anthony Cleverdon, on his death, being entered in the register as "Anthony Cleverdon the Elder, once of Hall, but now of Willsworthy, Gentleman;" and the date of his burial was 1689, so that he just survived the accession of the Prince of Orange.

It cannot be doubted that the few remaining years of his life saw him an altered man, and that he had discovered that with the loss of Hall he had gained something, as Luke had said, far more precious—the love of his children, and the knowledge how precious it was.

In the floor of the chancel, below the Communion-rails, was another Cleverdon monument, but not one of a Cleverdon of Willsworthy, but of a Rector of Peter Tavy. His Christian name was Luke. We may therefore conclude that Luke from being curate became incumbent of the church and parish he had served so faithfully. Beneath his name stood a second. The inscription ran thus: "Also of Elizabeth, his true helpmate, daughter of Anthony Cleverdon, formerly of Hall." There was no mention on it of the marriage with Fox. Below stood the text from Proverbs:

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her. She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life."

THE END.

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